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TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

A Publication Concerned With Natural History and Conservation

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

— Founded 1879 —
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Objectives of the Club: To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse the information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

Club Publications: THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST, a quarterly devoted to reporting research in all fields of natural history relevant to Canada, and TRAIL & LANDSCAPE, a quarterly providing articles on the natural history of the Ottawa Valley and on Club activities.

Field Trips, Lectures and other natural history activities are arranged for local members; see "Coming Events" in this issue.

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TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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Welcome New Members

Ottawa Area

Jo-Ann Benson & Family
Brian & Margot Cameron
Pete Christensen
Kelvin A. Desplanque
Betula M. Erlik
Joel F. Gibson & Family
Adrian Gollner
Diane Gordon
Stephanie Groom
Kelly A. Johnson & Family
Marta Khan
M. Kathy Lajeunesse & Family
Sheila M. Larkin
Randy Latimer & Family
John J. Macphee & Family
Dr. Nicole Mckenzie
Jeewanthi Mendis & Family
Remy Poulin
W. John Pratt & Family
Jeffrey M. Saarela
Graham Smart
Cindy A. Timmons & Family
Viviane Trubey
A. Villemaire & V. Hughes-Villemaire
Marjorie L. Ward

Gatineau Area

Denise Labelle
Cindy E. Munro & Family
Robert W. Reid & Family
Sylvie Roy & Family

Ontario
Cynthia Pekarik & Family

United States
Scott Patrick Byrne

Henry Steger
Chair, Membership
February 2006

"Golden Anniversary" Membership List 1942 - 2008

Henry Steger
Membership Chair

Joined in		
1942	R.Y.Edwards	Victoria BC
1943	C. Stuart Houston	Saskatoon SK
1943	Mr. & Mrs. H.A. Thomson	Ottawa ON
1946	Dr. Jack M. Gillett	Ottawa ON
1947	W.J. Cody	Ottawa ON
1947	Dr. W.A. Fuller	Athabasca AB
1948	Mrs. E. Frankton	Ottawa ON
1948	Mr. David Erskine	Willowdale ON
1950	H.G. Lumsden	Aurora ON
1954	Yvonne & James F. Bendell	Clayton ON
1956	Dr. Charles D. Bird	Eskine AB
1956	J.W. Holliday	Ottawa ON
1957	R.E. Bedford & Family	Ottawa ON
1957	J.E. & Mary E. Bryant	Ottawa ON
1957	Dr. C.S. Churcher	Gabriola Island BC
1958	Elizabeth Alexander	Cumberland ON
1958	F.R. Cook	Ottawa ON

The 129th Annual Business Meeting

K. McLachlan Hamilton

An annual business meeting may not be a preferred topic for a monthly gathering, but it is important for any club to have one. It is certainly a good way for members to get an idea of how their club is doing financially and what it is doing activity-wise. It is also a great way to voice your opinion, good or bad, on any aspect. I know Council tries to follow the wishes of its members, but it is difficult to do so if those wishes are not expressed.

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club annual business meeting was held on January 15. Twenty six people witnessed Frank Pope's move into the techno-world with his PowerPoint presentation of the auditor's report. The bar graphs really helped explain the Club's finances and by including multiple years, we could definitely see the trends. The Club continues to run a deficit (which Council continues to address); however, with increased fees and member generosity through donations and bequests, the OFNC is financially secure. Special mention should go to the late Victor John Macklin for his very generous bequest in 2007. The OFNC is truly thankful. Frank also took the time to thank the Canadian Museum of Nature for allowing the OFNC and the Macoun Club to use their facilities free of charge, the Central Experimental Farm for providing all the necessities for the Fletcher Wildlife Garden, and all the volunteers who spend countless hours throughout the year helping with the various activities.

Committee reports are always presented at this meeting, and are published in the Canadian Field-Naturalist, but here are some of the highlights:

The Birds Committee continues to organize the Fall and Christmas Bird Counts, Peregrine Falcon Watch, to review rare bird reports and to operate the rare bird alert and bird status line in the Ottawa area.

The Conservation Committee was active on many fronts, but most notably the Larose Forest and the Leitrim wetland. Their continued efforts to protect natural areas are through writing letters, attending municipal meetings and hearings.

Club members were invited to 25 field trips, 10 monthly meetings, four workshops, and the annual soirée. Meanwhile, Macouners were busy with 17 indoor meetings, 16 field trips, a monthly newsletter, The Little Bear, and their website.

Volunteers at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden contributed over 3600 hours of labour which focussed on the Butterfly Meadow, the Backyard Garden, and invasive plant control. The annual native plant sale was a great success, a pergola was erected in memory of Eileen Evans, and a Backyard Garden Bench was reconstructed for Dale Crook.

There have been some changes to your council this year; some members have retired, some have moved to a different committee, and others are new. Briefly, the officers and ex-officio members are:

President	Ken Allison
Vice President	Ann Mackenzie
Recording Secretary	Annie Belair
Past President	Michael Murphy
Business Manager	Frank Pope
Editor CFN	Francis Cook
Editor T&L	Karen McLachlan Hamilton
ON Nature Rep.	Eleanor Zurbrigg

Members at large are Barbara Chouinard, Julia Cipriani, David Hobden, Diane Kitching (who keeps council informed of the activities of the Macoun Club), Diane Lepage, Luke Periard, and Jeff Skevington. If you are interested in learning more about the different committees, I suggest you continue to read on—committees and contact numbers are on pages 50-51.

The evening concluded with Fenja presenting a few tokens of appreciation for work done by outgoing council members. Mike Murphy was recognised for his four years service as President, so was Susan Laurie Bourque for her four year contribution as Secretary. A card acknowledging Bill Cody's committment to the OFNC was made available for people to sign (Bill served on council for 58 years and was Business Manager for most of that time). Special recognition was given to Frank Pope for assuming the duties of Business Manager on top of the other positions he currently holds.

OFNC Committees for 2008

Frank Pope

The following OFNC committee members were approved by Council at its meeting on February 18. Committee members may be added during the year as approved by Council. The members listed below will operate your club in 2008. Committee Chairs appear in bold letters with their telephone numbers and email addresses. Should you have any questions, comments, complaints or compliments pertaining to the operations of a committee, or should you desire to serve on a committee, please contact the Chair or speak to a member of the relevant committee.

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Frank Pope
Joyce Reddoch
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In Memory of Eileen Evans: Dedication of the FWG Pergola

We invite all who knew Eileen to join us for a dedication of the new pergola, in her memory. Eileen's family made a very generous donation on her behalf to help fund this lovely new addition. Please help us celebrate her memory and her legacy.

Date: Saturday, April 26, 2008
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Location: Fletcher Wildlife Garden, Interpretive Centre (Bldg. 138)

Refreshments will be served.
Please RSVP (613-234-6767 or *vanessa@magma.ca*) before April 18.

Conservation Matters

David Hobden

Water Chestnut Control in Voyageur Provincial Park
Water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) is an alien invasive aquatic weed that has been detected in Voyageur Provincial Park on the Ottawa River near Hawkesbury, about 100 km downstream from Ottawa.

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resource proposes to conduct a *Trapa natans* control program at Voyageur, as well as surveying other areas along the river shoreline. They are seeking a grant from the federal Ministry of the Environment. "OFNC has agreed to be listed as a supporter of this project, and we hope to find some volunteers to help with the work."

Southern Corridor Development Concern
The NCC is continuing to sell off land for development. The latest proposal is to rezone a field next to McCarthy Woods in the Hunt Club area. It was originally part of the Southern Parkway corridor, and now includes the proposed Poets' Pathway. The field is an important foraging area for birds, especially raptors that roost and nest in the woods. The City appreciates the importance of the woods, but apparently not the contribution of the field to their value. This project is ongoing.

Cormorants in Point Pelée National Park
In April 2007, we cooperated with Peaceful Parks Coalition (PPC) to object to the proposed amendments to the Fish and Game Act that would allow increased and widespread cormorant killing and nest disruption on the Great Lakes. Our rationale was that the cormorant is a native wild bird species whose increased numbers cannot be attributed to human activities such as agriculture and landfill sites. Cormorant populations fell to very low levels during the DDT pesticide era, and have now rebounded. We have no evidence that the present high populations are an overshoot directly attributable to the earlier use of pesticides, although there are suggestions human intervention may have contributed through an increased food supply.

Recently, PPC informed us that the Point Pelée National Park administration was considering measures to reduce the cormorant population of Middle Island, (acquired and added to the Point Pelée National Park in 2002). PPC forwarded a consultant's report that cites concern about damage to rare (including Canada endangered) plant species that are suffering from soil contamination by bird

droppings (guano) at cormorant nesting colonies. The plants in question are abundant in the equivalent climate of West Virginia, but protecting Canada's only location for some of these plant species seems justified. On the other hand, conservation means allowing natural processes to take place without interference. We intend to submit comments when the park management plan is officially announced.

Ontario Government Proposed Cosmetic Pesticide Ban

On the recommendation of the Conservation Committee, OFNC has sent a letter to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment supporting the banning of both the use and sale of cosmetic pesticides.

West-end Interprovincial Bridge

Three possible routes to this bridge have been identified: Holly Acres Road (Andrew Haydon Park), Moodie Drive (Crystal Bay community) and Dunrobin/Riddell Drive (provincially significant wetland). The OFNC mandate is to defend the natural world, as exemplified by the Constance Bay to Shirleys Bay wetland complex (with Riddell Drive in the middle). It makes sense under a "smart growth" policy to look ahead to select a route for a bridge that will be needed sometime in the future. The global warming situation leads to the questions "is growth smart?" and "will the bridge ever be needed?" At the moment a bridge in the east is likely to precede it.

Interactions with Ontario Nature

The last Conservation Matters reported on our attempts to help Ontario Nature introduce environmental concerns into the provincial election. We were unable to include our own concerns over poor planning procedures that fail to protect our natural environment. Now we hear the City has stopped work on an approved development on the Carp River flood plain because it was based on a flawed environmental assessment. This is not the first example of factual errors in assessments in Ottawa. Across the province there must be many of them. Ontario Nature is in a good position to lobby for changes. We need procedures to ensure assessments are properly done and independently reviewed.

Purple Loosestrife
Good News for Butterflies

Linda Jeays

The aggressive invasion of Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) into the Ottawa area over the last few years has been deplored by every naturalist I know. But while invasive species are admittedly notorious for threatening some aspect or other of the native ecosystem, there is a silver lining to the recent ubiquity of Purple Loosestrife in our region: butterflies love it.

Since the year 2000, I have documented 17 species of Lepidoptera nectaring at the plant. These were from several different families. The accumulation of this data was incidental to other studies and I think it likely that a targeted search would find several more adult butterfly species feeding at loosestrife.

Flowering season

The long flowering period of Purple Loosestrife, which lasts eight to nine weeks, coincides with the prime time to see a large number of adult butterflies in the Ottawa area. In 2003 I made notes on the flowering season of Purple Loosestrife and documented nine species using the plant as a nectar source.

> **June 28-30** The first flowers began to open on some Purple Loosestrife plants.
> **July 5** About three-quarters of the loosestrife had fresh flowers open on the spikes.
> **July 7** A European Skipper was nectaring at loosestrife on a hydro easement off Moodie Drive. The spike was about two-thirds in flower.
> **July 14** By mid-July most plants had a wealth of open flowers covering about three-quarters of the stems. On July 14 a Cabbage White was easy to observe in a roadside patch of loosestrife.
> **July 25-31** During the last week in July many areas were a blaze of colour with fully-flowered loosestrife. A good example was a low wet meadow bordering the Jock River along Richmond Road. Close examination of the top of the spike always showed a few inches which were destined to flower later in the season. During this period loosestrife served as a nectar plant for Black Swallowtail on July 29 and Viceroy on July 31.

August 5-14 Lush loosestrife was used as a nectar source for Great Spangled Fritillary on August 7 and Clouded Sulphur on August 14.
August 18-30 Plants were now seeding and fields lost their purple flush. However, at the tips of the spikes and along branching stems, fresh flowers were still opening in sufficient numbers to attract butterflies. I noted Monarch on August 18. On August 30 Purple Loosestrife was the only nectar source available for Common Ringlet and Clouded Sulphur in a roadside patch of weeds on Rushmore Road.
September 1-9 While loosestrife stands became a dusky, brown-purple haze as September arrived, in fact there were enough fresh flowers to provide an adequate nectar source. Clouded Sulphur used the Jock River Shoreline Project area on Richmond Road as late as September 8, and Cabbage White visited a field-edge plant on Eagleson Road on September 9.

Wide variety of habitats
In addition to the long flowering season, another obvious factor in attracting a diversity of butterfly species is the diversity of habitats which loosestrife colonizes. While primarily a wetland plant and the denizen of river banks, lake edges and roadside ditches, it easily adapts to dry disturbed habitats, hydro easements and open fields. One July day a Summer Azure was busy feeding at loosestrife beside a creek on Flood Road. In August 2001, a tiny Least Skipper was nectaring at loosestrife growing in the shelter of a railway embankment bordering an open field on Twin Elm Road.

Purple Loosestrife frequently stretches out along a wood edge, hydro easement or grassy track, providing a food corridor for insects. In such areas I have seen Common Wood-Nymph, Dun Skipper and Eastern Comma using the plant for nectar. Loosestrife also forms islands between, or at the edge of, ploughed or cultivated fields. I found Orange Sulphur nectaring at such an island between alfalfa fields in 2006. Several different butterfly species can often be seen feeding together at these isolated loosestrife stands, thus providing great butterfly-watching opportunities—especially with respect to behaviour and the interaction between species. For example, on a sunny 24°C day in August 2007, two Bronze Coppers, two Clouded Sulphurs, three Monarchs and a Cabbage White were all nectaring at a loosestrife oasis between cultivated fields near Richmond. A Least Skipper was skirting the base of the plants. On another occasion a colourful Red Admiral nectared beside a pristine Cabbage White at a few roadside plants on Steeplehill Crescent.

Advantages of Purple Loosestrife
Why do butterflies love loosestrife? As mentioned above, the flowers open gradually from the bottom to the top of the densely packed spike, so that fresh nectar

is constantly becoming available. Equally advantageous is the plant's 2-4' height which means that butterflies can choose the height at which they prefer to nectar. For example, on August 26, 2004 I found Eastern Tailed Blue nectaring at loosestrife which was flowering about a foot off the ground. The Blue would not have been much higher up.

Butterflies, like many insects, see well in the ultraviolet spectrum and a stand of the significantly marked loosestrife flowers is clearly inviting to them. In addition, many species of Lepidoptera are particularly attracted to purple flowers and the densely packed spikes of loosestrife are an energy-saver.

A careful look at Purple Loosestrife may be needed to reveal its visitors. Even a large Monarch (which has its wings closed while nectaring) is often well-camouflaged in the busy inflorescence of the spike. Migrants may well recognize a familiar nectar source from their travels, but I believe our resident species simply know a feast when they see it.

I have noticed that Purple Loosestrife can be the preferred nectar source even when other flowering plants are available. For example, along a hydro easement on August 7, 2003 Black Swallowtail, Great Spangled Fritillary, Cabbage White and Viceroy were all in the same location feeding at Purple Loosestrife in preference to fresh and well-flowered Boneset, Queen Anne's Lace, Black-eyed Susan, Swamp Milkweed, Alsike Clover and goldenrod.

Nectaring at Purple Loosestrife is not without its dangers. On a couple of occasions I have found a Cabbage White propped up lifelike, but dead, between loosestrife flowers. Further investigation of one of these corpses revealed an ambush bug sucking the juices out of the butterfly's head.

The hardy and resilient plant can quickly establish large colonies with its tough roots and thousands of seeds per spike, although I fancy that Purple Loosestrife has been more self-limiting in the Ottawa area—with a little help from City mowing machines—than was anticipated a few years ago. Its tendency to form compact communities means that the food supply at a particular location is likely to improve each year becoming a reliable nectar source for butterflies.

Purple Loosestrife is a ubiquitous, easily accessible, bountiful, long-lasting, compact nectar source for butterflies. However we feel about its recent invasion, one thing is sure—Purple Loosestrife is good news for butterflies.

Species documented using Purple Loosestrife as a nectar source 2000-2007
Least Skipper (*Ancyloxypha numitor*)
European Skipper (*Thymelicus lineola*)
Dun Skipper (*Euphyes vestris metacomet*)
Black Swallowtail (*Papilio polyxenes asterius*)
Cabbage White (*Pieris rapae*)
Clouded Sulphur (*Colias philodice*)
Orange Sulphur (*Colias eurytheme*)
Bronze Copper (*Lycaena hyllus*)
Eastern Tailed Blue (*Everes comyntas*)
Summer Azure (*Celastrina neglecta*)
Great Spangled Fritillary (*Speyeria cybele*)
Eastern Comma (*Polygonia comma*)
Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta rubria*)
Viceroy (*Limenitis archippus*)
Common Ringlet (*Coenonympha tullia inornata*)
Common Wood-Nymph (*Cercyonis pegala nephele*)
Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*)

Other species to look for on loosestrife
Northern Cloudywing, Peck's Skipper, Tawny-edged Skipper, Leonard's Skipper, Meadow Fritillary, Milbert's Tortoiseshell, American Lady, Painted Lady, White Admiral.

Note
Checking loosestrife may turn up a rarity. In July 2004, Ross Layberry saw Eastern Tiger Swallowtail nectaring at Purple Loosestrife near Manion Corners. It was the first year for this butterfly in the Ottawa area.

References
Layberry, Ross. 2007. Butterflies of the Ottawa District; 103 species . . . and counting. *T&L* 41(1):16-36.

Mud Season

Frederick W. Scheuler

Water is flow and upland is soil: Life is where they lie commingled,
Beneath the great green wetland hedges, and spring is when, in one vast heave,
They marry the countryside and bear a life for summer.
It was spring when the muddy lips of the Earth open to swallow
Snow's residual dirt and grime and poop and pee into tomorrow,
And grind them into the promise of green: Lawns are licked clean by rebirth,
And burgeoning begets oligotrophy as the hundred thousand wedges probe the entangled bank.

Mud-borne grace, this view of grandeur: life extends its liquid lure
As the smacking hopes of spring engulf your narrow cares and bring
The running sap, the piping Peeper, peenting Doodle, waves of Leapers,
Green-on-green recycled dung, and, in a song that's not yet sung,
Creakers crying from each corner, streams that flow through draughty summers,
Mitigation for Dow's Swamp, Turtles without male sex bias,
Big-seeded herbs under the Maples, Eels and Salmon in the Rideau.

And mud's for sure the stuff to love for those who feel the season's shove.
Before the fury of the ditching, this Mixedwood Plain was ruled by mud:
Before the roads chopped us to bits and dams prevented migrant fish,
Before we sold our life as potash, and hurled the Pines down from the ridges.
Sharp heights divide the hardcut lands, here water sheds through trackless wetlands—
Hanlans Marsh, the Long Swamp Fen, Mer Bleu, and the Groveton Bog—
Where ooze still reigns and no one enters after winter's hold is melted.

And do they harbour mystic Cranes? Such Thunderpumps as still remain?
Beaver and Muskrat, Flag and Phragmite, Bladderwort and hybrid Cattails,
Orchid fens with hidden Spotties, Four-toes in their *Sphagnum* grottos,
Lymnaea with spiral livers, 'Pout and 'Puppies in the rivers,
Sticklebacks in bony armour, Micro-pike in peaty tartans,
Rails that walk as if on water, Lilypads with Mink Frogs dotted,
Utterbackia, Lizardtail, and *Ligumia nasuta*: Mud's their home and so is ours.

Species: [Spring] Peeper = *Pseudacris crucifer*; "[Timber]Doodle" = Woodcock, *Scolopax minor*; "Leaper" = Northern Leopard Frog, *Lithobates [=Rana] pipiens*, "Creaker" = Chorus Frog, *Pseudacris triseriata/maculata*; Eel = *Anguilla rostrata*; Salmon = *Salmo salar*; [Sandhill] Crane = *Grus canadensis*; "Thunderpump"= American Bittern, *Botaurus lentiginosus*; Beaver = *Castor canadensis*; Muskrat = *Ondatra zibethicus*; Flag = *Iris versicolor*; "Phragmite" = Reed, *Phragmites australis* subspecies *americanus*; Bladderwort = *Utricularia*; "hybrid Cattails" = *Typha x glauca*; "Spottie" = Spotted Turtle, *Clemmys guttata*; "Four-toe"[ed Salamander] = *Hemidactylium scutatum*; *Lymnaea [stagnalis]* = Great Pond Snail; [Mud]pout = Brown Bullhead, *Ameiurus nebulosus*; [Mud]puppy = *Necturus maculosus*; [Four-spine] Stickleback = *Culaea inconstans*; "Micro-pike" = Central Mudminnow, *Umbra limi*; [Virginia] Rail = *Rallus limicola*; Mink Frog = *Lithobates [=Rana] septentrionalis*; *Sphagnum* = Sphagnum Moss; *Utterbackia [imbecillis]* = Papershell Floater; Lizard['s-]tail = *Saururus cernuus*; *Ligumia nasuta* = Pointed Pondmussel. The 'Mixedwood Plain' is the ecozone designation for the sedimentary lowlands of Ontario and Quebec.

from Darwin's first statement of descent with modification by natural selection: "[Sept] 28th.[1838] .... One may say there is a force like a hundred thousand wedges trying [to] force every kind of adapted structure into the gaps in the economy of nature, or rather forming gaps by thrusting out weaker ones." [Notebook D 134e-135e]

from the last paragraph of the **Origin:** "It is interesting to contemplate an entangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent on each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us . . . There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved."

A Plea for Political Engagement

Jim Ronson

Why does the OFNC have a program of lecturcs and outings? Are they for cntertainment, in the same category as a television program on nature?

I hope that the main purpose of the club is to prepare people to defend the natural environment. Are scientists misinformed in believing that the environment is in an advanced stage of crisis? I believe the scientists.

So, where do we go from here? First, I would ask that you look at your past record on activism by answering the following questions for yourself.

1. Have you asked an environmentalist to seek political office?
2. Have you assembled a team of election volunteers?
3. Have you worked for a candidate who understands the crisis?
4. Have you donated funds to a campaign?
5. Have you analysed environmental issues in your local area in order to push those issues in a campaign?
6. Do you believe that scientists have a special role in the environmental movement? If so, have you helped to recruit them?

How might some of this work?

In the December 2007 issue of Canadian Geographic, the article Dragonfly Discovery outlined the discovery of the dragonfly called the Hines emerald. Chris Evans found it in thc Minesing wctlands. Never before had one been seen in Canada. In fact this specics is on the Endangered Species list in the United States. A nice find, but what happened next was critical. Cris Evans declared that he would "work for the preservation of their habitat." What a great attitude! Unfortunately, he will encounter huge obstacles unless he can turn to elected officials who have the knowledge and insights of ficld naturalists. These politicians have the clout to make things happen for Chris Evans.

Collecting Reedgrasses (*Calamagrostis)* in Appalachia: Stories from the Field

Jeffery M. Saarela[1]

A substantial amount of basic information about plants is derived from studying them in their natural habitats. Field work can provide critical insights into multiple attributes of species, such as their basic ecology, population sizes, geographical distributions, flowering times, and overall biology. It also provides opportunities to collect specimens from which morphological and genetic information can be obtained. Most plant taxonomists will agree that understanding organisms in the field is vital to the success of the taxonomic enterprise. Unfortunately, for much of the world's plant biodiversity, little is known beyond a name. More critically, many of the world's plant species have not yet been discovered by science. To fill these gaps in our collective understanding of plant biodiversity, plant taxonomists are constantly on the front lines, conducting field work around the globe.

Information obtained through taxonomic field work is initially stored in field note books, on herbarium specimen labels, and in the minds of investigators. It is eventually communicated to others via the usual traditional methods, including taxonomic monographs, revisions, floras, field guides, popular books, and, increasingly, over the internet. Through publication this information becomes part of the permanent record, and it is accessible to others, but behind every piece of field data and every collected specimen are the stories of the field workers and their adventures in near and far away places. These stories, unfortunately, do not often get told, even though they have the potential to reveal much insight into the scientific process.

My colleague, Dr. Paul Peterson (Research Botanist and Curator, Department of Botany, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC), and I, at the Canadian Museum of Nature (CMN) in Ottawa, are engaged in a collaborative study of the taxonomy and phylogenetics (evolutionary relationships) of species in the reedgrass genus *Calamagrostis* and their close relatives in other

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genera, including the bent grasses (*Agrostis* L.), june-grasses (*Koeleria* Pers.), and vernal grasses/sweet grasses (*Anthoxanthum* L.). Through study of morphological characters and DNA sequence data, we are trying to clarify the taxonomy and reconstruct the evolutionary history of this large group. *Calamagrostis* is one of the largest genera of grasses, with about 250 species that occur in many different habitats throughout the world, from low elevation wetlands to the highest alpine meadows. Globally, there are many problems with the taxonomy of the group. As in most grasses, many species of *Calamagrostis* are morphologically similar. They can be difficult to distinguish from each other, and even from species in closely related genera like *Agrostis*—especially to the untrained eye.

Over the last century botanists have compiled good information on the morphology and geographic distributions of *Calamagrostis* species in Canada and the United States[2], yet we know surprisingly little about their biology and evolutionary histories. In North America, north of Mexico, there are 24 native and one introduced species, including several narrowly distributed and little-studied endemics in the eastern and western mountains. Another species is widely cultivated as an ornamental grass (*Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'). Several *Calamagrostis* species occur in the Ottawa region, including the native bluejoint reedgrass [*C. canadensis* (Michx.) P. Beauv.], slimstem reedgrass [*C. stricta* (Timm.) Koeler] and the introduced feather grass [*C. epigejos* (L.) Roth], which was featured in *T&L*.[3] These local species are part of a larger eastern North American assemblage of *Calamagrostis* taxa that are not all found in the immediate Ottawa area. Most of the other eastern species occur south of the limits of the Wisconsin glaciation that ended approximately 10,000 years ago. To properly understand these local *Calamagrostis* species (e.g., from a morphological or genetic perspective), they must be considered in the broader geographical and evolutionary context of the genus as a whole.

Over the last several years, Paul and I have been conducting field work throughout North America, and Paul has also been conducting field work in several South American countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru. In 2004, we travelled and collected for four weeks throughout northern British Columbia, the

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2 Marr, K.L., R.J. Hebda, and C.W. Greene. 2007. *Calamagrostis* Adans. In: M. E. Barkworth, K. M. Capels, S. Long, L. K. Anderton, and M. B. Piep [Editors]. Flora of North America: north of Mexico Volume 24. Magnoliophyta: Commelinidae (in part): Poaceae, part 1. New York, Oxford University Press.

3 Darbyshire, S. 2006. Feather grass (*Calamagrostis epigejos*) in the Ottawa District. *T&L* 40(1):21–24.

Yukon, eastern Alaska and the extreme northwestern Northwest Territories[4]; in 2006, we collected for 10 days throughout northern California; in August 2007, we spent two weeks searching for several *Calamagrostis* species in the eastern USA; in September/October 2007 we travelled for four weeks throughout northern and central Mexico, which has about a dozen known *Calamagrostis* species, all different from those that occur in Canada and the USA, including two new species recently discovered and described by Paul and his colleagues. In summer 2007, I used information from the *T&L* report to locate and collect *C. epigejos* in Ottawa. The general goals of our field work have been to learn and develop an appreciation for *Calamagrostis* species in their natural environments, to collect fresh material for morphological and genetic studies, and to document the distribution of the species through time and space, an endeavour that is particularly important during this critical time of global change.

We have amassed hundreds of plant collections—our specimens are stored permanently in the National Herbarium of Canada at the CMN and in the United States National Herbarium at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC. Each specimen has an associated leaf tissue sample that was rapidly dried in the field with silica gel, preserving the DNA in a manner suitable for later study. I am now sequencing DNA from these dried leaf samples in the DNA Laboratory at the CMN's Natural Heritage Building in Aylmer. Last summer we presented some of our preliminary results at scientific meetings in Chicago, Illinois, and Zacatecas, Mexico, and eventually we will publish our work in a scientific journal, making the results available to the international scientific community. Over the course of our field work so far, Paul and I have had many adventures in our quest to find and study *Calamagrostis* in their native environments. Here I present a general account of our 2007 collecting trip in the eastern United States.

Climbing Mt. Le Conte for *Calamagrostis cainii*

Calamagrostis cainii Hitchc. was named and described in 1934 from material collected along the slopes of Mt. Le Conte in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee. This narrowly distributed species is known only from the type locality, and from Craggy Gardens and Mount Craig about 100 miles eastward in

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[4] For an account of this research trip, see: Saarela, J.M. 2004. North to Alaska: grass collecting in northwestern North America. *Menziesia* 9(4): 9-13. [Newsletter of the Native Plant Society of British Columbia, available online at *http://www.npsbc.org/Newsletter/Menziesia_04_Fall.pdf.* Modified version reprinted in *The Plant Press* 8(2):1, 9-11. 2005. Newsletter of the Department of Botany & US National Herbarium, Smithsonian Institution.

North Carolina; these latter two populations were discovered only recently, in the early 1990s. The park preserves a large portion of the Great Smoky Mountains; it is extremely rich in biodiversity and has been designated an International Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations. The ongoing All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory project in the park has documented approximately 12,000 non-microbial species, including over 800 species new to science.[5]

Calamagrostis cainii was the first of a handful of eastern *Calamagrostis* species that we would try to find. I flew from Ottawa to Washington DC, and Paul and I spent most of our first day driving south to the park boundary. We camped that night along a small stream in a dense forest that was completely overtaken by the alarmingly invasive legume, kudzu [*Pueraria lobata* (Willd.) Ohwi.], and we went to sleep amidst a thunderous choir of cicadas. In the morning we headed to the park office to pick up our pre-arranged research permit—all research activities in the park must be approved by the proper officials. We obtained our permit with little difficulty from the extremely helpful park biologist Keith Langdon, who also provided us with precise information on locations of known populations of *Calamagrostis cainii* along the trail to the summit of Mt. Le Conte.

Langdon informed us that we would first encounter a small population of the grass with relatively few individuals, and further up the mountain we would find a much larger one—the largest known population of the species in the world! With enthusiasm, heavy backpacks filled with collecting gear (plastic bags, silica gel to preserve DNA samples, a global positioning system, digging knives, field books, camera), sleeping gear, and enough water and food for the overnight trip, we started hiking up the trail. After a few miles walking and seeing only a few grass species, including oat grass (*Danthonia* sp.) which was dominant along the edges of almost the entire trail, manna grass (*Glyceria* sp.) growing in more mesic areas, and hairgrass [*Deschampsia flexuosa* (L.) Trin.] in dry, rocky areas, we came across *Calamagrostis cainii*. The species was growing along the steep rocky cliff face at Alum Cave, with only a few other vascular plant species. It was immediately apparent that this species is very easy to recognize, growing as a large tussock grass with long, glaucous leaves and an open, pyramidal-shaped inflorescence. On closer examination—we always carry 10x hand lenses in the field—the short hairs at the base of the lemma and the subapically inserted awn clearly identified the plant as a species of *Calamagrostis*. Along the hiking trail, and with a bit of treacherous climbing on the steep and slippery rock face—extreme botany—we were able to take

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5 Explore the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) in Great Smoky Mountains National Park at *http://www.dlia.org/index.shtml.*

photographs, collect voucher specimens for future study, and collect leaf material for genetic analyses. As we continued up Mt. Le Conte, we encountered several more seemingly discrete populations, taking more photographs and samples. In many places along the trail, *Calamagrostis cainii* was the dominant grass and even the dominant vascular plant. In a small area where there appeared to be a recent rock slide, there were hundreds of clumps of the grass in view up and down the side of the mountain.

Calamagrostis cainii *growing along the trail to the summit of Mt. Le Conte in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee.*

The top of Mt. Le Conte is a not-so-short five mile hike that ascends from the parking lot trailhead to about 1000 m. But unlike many mountain summits in the backcountry, atop Mt. Le Conte sits a rustic lodge that provides home cooked meals, overnight accommodation, and panoramic views for weary hikers with enough foresight to book a room in advance. Picking up our back country permit at the park visitor centre earlier in the day, we were lucky to secure two spots in the far less civilized lean-to camping shelter just down the trail from the lodge (because of heavy use, tents are not allowed along this trail, and overnight visitors must stay either at the lodge or the shelter). Once we reached the top, around 7 pm, we strolled through the lodge grounds, remarking how nice it would have been to get a room there and enjoy the home cooked roast beef and potato dinner being served.

Hungry, we carried on to the shelter, only to find that the small, two-level plywood-floored sleeping quarters were full—apparently it was overbooked. With no tents, little energy, and nowhere else to go, we resigned to sleeping on the ground. With our day's grass collections laid out as we cooked a camp stove dinner, a friendly backpacker from Texas asked us if we were "some kind of vegetarians;" evidently he thought we were eating our grasses.

Harvested specimens of Calamagrostis cainii. *The small bags contain silica gel, a desiccant which rapidly dries leaf material and preserves DNA so it can be studied back in the laboratory.*

In the morning haze, we were among the bustle of 12 or so other campers packing their gear, eating breakfast, and preparing for the descent from Mt. Le Conte. Before leaving, we headed back to the lodge grounds to fill our water bottles and collect the grasses growing around the lodge. Collecting such introduced grasses as smooth brome (*Bromus inermis* Leyss.), red fescue (*Festuca rubra* L.), and Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis* L.) around the lodge early in the morning, we quickly had several lodge overnighters asking curiously what we were doing. One person turned into several, and before long we had a small crowd gathered and Paul and I were giving an impromptu biology lesson about the biological richness of the Great Smoky Mountains, the endemic *Calamagrostis cainii* that brought us all the

way to the top of this mountain, and the general biodiversity of grasses. One woman remarked surprisingly to her husband about Paul, "Can you believe he's been studying grass for 28 years!" Lodge staff were equally concerned with our activities, asking if we were with the Park Service as we harvested grasses without abandon out of the wet ground around the water pump overflow. Of course it is illegal to disturb any biological material in national parks without an official permit. After explaining the legitimacy of our actions, the lodge workers told us that the park has serious problems with people illegally poaching wild ginseng (*Panax quinquefolium* L.). To deter such activities, park personnel have marked individual ginseng plants with dye packets that explode onto poachers disturbing them.

The mostly downhill eight mile hike from Mt. Le Conte lodge to the loop trailhead at Newfound Gap winds along narrow rocky ridges and through a cool Fraser fir [*Abies fraseri* (Pursh) Poiret] forest, peppered with scenic overlooks. The trail intersects the Appalachian Trail along the North Carolina/Tennessee border. We continued to encounter *Calamagrostis cainii* growing in several spots along the trail near the mountain summit, but as we descended the mountain, the species no longer occurred, quickly becoming a memory. The agrostological highlight (agrostology is the scientific study of grasses) of our descent was collecting northern short-husk [*Brachyelytrum aristosum* (Michx.) P. Beauv. ex Branner & Coville], a grass species I studied with Paul at the Smithsonian Institution in 2003. *Brachyelytrum aristosum* is distributed in southeastern Canada and the adjacent northeastern United States, and south through the Appalachian Mountains at higher elevations, where the species likely retreated to during the Wisconsin glaciation. The congeneric and closely related species, *B. erectum* (Schreb.) P. Beauv., is widely distributed at lower elevations throughout the more northern eastern United States. It also occurs in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, although we did not encounter it.

Five hours after leaving the shelter atop the mountain, we reached the parking lot and trailhead at Newfound Gap, about eight miles from where we parked the day before. Within a few minutes, we were graciously given a ride to our vehicle by a mom, daughter and grandma from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. We had successfully found the first of the *Calamagrostis* species we were searching for.

How *Calamagrostis cinnoides* Might Have Gotten Its Name

Our next destination in Great Smoky Mountains National Park was a locality in Cade's Cove, where *Calamagrostis cinnoides* (Muhl.) W. P. C. Barton, another eastern species, was known to occur. Park staff informed us that 25 individuals of this species were observed at this spot 15 years earlier, when the area once received some water outflow from a nearby pump house. The pump house has since been moved and the area has more or less dried up. Park staff are concerned about the fate of some of the rare plants in this area that prefer wetter habitats, including

Calamagrostis cinnoides. With detailed habitat information in hand, we were hopeful that the grass persisted and confident that we could find it. We relocated the area easily, after being held up by swarms of tourists photographing two black bear cubs in a tree along the roadside (Great Smoky Mountains National Park is a popular place for wildlife). Within minutes of arriving we thought we had found our plant, but on closer inspection we realized we had, in fact, found *Cinna arundinacea* L., a species closely related to the bluegrass genus (*Poa* L.), but remarkably superficially similar in appearance to *Calamagrostis cinnoides*. Both are about the same height, grow in similar habitats, and have one floret (the floral unit of a grass) per spikelet. Only upon close examination of the flowers and the leaves can these species be differentiated: *Calamagrostis cinnoides* has long glumes that exceed the florets, an awn that is inserted on the lemma below its apex, long hairs at the base of the lemma, and hairy leaves; *Cinna arundinacea* has glumes that are slightly shorter than the lemma, an awn that is inserted apically, no hairs at the base of the lemma, and smooth (non-hairy) leaves. We mused that *Calamagrostis cinnoides* was named after its seeming similarity to *Cinna arundinacea*. Undeterred, we continued our search for *Calamagrostis cinnoides* in the general area. After about 30 minutes of searching in the moist shaded woods among swathes of poison ivy [*Toxicodendron radicans* (L.) Kuntze] we found and collected cut grass (*Leersia* sp.), longleaf chasmanthium [*Chasmanthium sessiliflorum* (Poir) H. O. Yates] and more *Cinna arundinacea*, but no *C. cinnoides*. At one point I thought Paul had found the plant when I heard him screaming from only a few yards away, but in fact he had been swiftly attacked by a swarm of yellow jacket wasps after inadvertently stepping on their nest. With more careful looking, Paul finally encountered a few scattered plants that we positively identified as *Calamagrostis cinnoides*, contented with our perseverance. The plants were just beginning to flower and were in excellent shape for collecting, but individuals were not common, generally found scattered amongst the other vegetation. Remarkably, the number of individuals we observed was no greater than the previous observations 15 years earlier, but it was clear that certainly the species has persisted in this spot.

We spent the night in a park campground, lulled to sleep by the neighbouring campers' car alarm. The next morning was consumed with processing our collections from the past two days, putting specimens into a plant press to flatten and dry them, and taking more leaf samples for DNA studies. In the Great Smoky Mountains, we found what we were looking for and more, collecting two species of *Calamagrostis* and many other interesting grasses.

***Calamagrostis porteri* on the Rocky Ridges of Virginia**

After six hours driving north on the interstate, we were the lone campers in a small campground at Wolf Gap in George Washington National Forest, about 70 miles west of Washington DC in Shenandoah County, Virginia. Earlier in the year, on a

weekend family getaway, Paul had found Porter's reedgrass (*Calamagrostis porteri* A. Gray) growing along a trail that leaves from the campground. He therefore knew this species could easily be relocated here, making it a reasonable stop for us to make more detailed observations and collections. *Calamagrostis porteri* subsp. *porteri* occurs in dry oak forests, often on rocky ridge tops, in the northeastern and central United States. It is generally distinguished from other *Calamagrostis* by its hairy collars (the summit of the leaf sheaths and blades), contracted to open panicles, callus hairs 0.4-0.6 times the length of the lemmas and short awns. The conspecific taxon, *Calamagrostis porteri* subsp. *insperata* (Swallen) C. W. Greene (Bartley's reed bent grass), differs from *C. porteri* subsp. *porteri* in a few subtle morphological characteristics and occurs further west in Ohio, Kentucky, Missouri and Illinois.

Waking at first light (6 am) we broke camp, packed daypacks with breakfast and collecting gear, and began the short climb up to the ridge along Mill Mountain Trail to Big Schloss, a high rocky outcrop with scenic, nearly 360 degree views of the valleys below. Reaching the ridge top, which straddles the Virginia/West Virginia state line, we immediately encountered the inspiration of our morning hike growing in dense patches along the edge of the woods. As we started to dig the plants, I remarked that this might represent my earliest collection in a day (well before 8 am in this case)!

Calamagrostis porteri is the dominant component of the vegetation along this ridge, growing in the dry and rocky open woods with rock chestnut oak (*Quercus prinus* L.), pignut hickory [*Carya glabra* (Miller) Sweet], Virginia pine (*Pinus virginiana* Miller), maples (*Acer* spp.), bottlebrush (*Elymus hystrix* L.), oat grass (*Danthonia* sp.), *Bromus pubescens* Muhl. Ex Willd., tufted hair grass [*Deschampsia cespitosa* (L.) P. Beauv.], clubmoss (*Lycopodium* sp.), nimblewill (*Muhlenbergia schreberi* J. F. Gmel.), and muhly [*Muhlenbergia tenuiflora* (Willd.) Britton, Sterns & Poggenb.]. Research published in the early 1980s indicated that *Calamagrostis porteri* is a sexually reproducing species that rarely flowers. The species primarily reproduces vegetatively, flowering rarely in open and sometimes disturbed areas. Our observations at Wolf Gap were fully consistent with this—we saw many clumps of vegetative plants along the 2.1 mile stretch of the trail we walked, and only three small patches with flowering individuals, each in areas with little to no canopy cover. We walked, unknowingly, right past one of these along the edge of the woods where the trail from camp first meets the ridge, missing it completely as we observed and discussed the dense vegetation along the other side of the trail. Nonetheless, in the area we searched there was ample flowering material to make good voucher collections. Not bad for a Thursday morning—before noon we had walked about four miles, collected voucher specimens and leaf material from many "individuals" (it is not clear if large patches represent a single, clonal individual or multiple, genetically distinct individuals) of *Calamagrostis porteri*, as well as material of

several other grass species. As we left the area, we stopped for a quick cool-off and clean-up in Little Stony Creek, our first opportunity to "shower" since starting our trip.

From Lowland Bog to Mountain Summit: The Elusive *Calamagrostis pickeringii*
Pickering's reedgrass (*Calamagrostis pickeringii* A. Gray) occurs in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and in the mountains of New Hampshire, New York and New Jersey. There is a single known population of this species in Maine. We aimed to collect the species in the Adirondack Mountains in New York and the White Mountains of New Hampshire, areas for which we had information from earlier collections to direct us to populations. In the Adirondacks we stopped at a roadside bog alongside Racquette Lake, and with minimal searching we found the species growing with typical and fascinating bog vegetation, including carnivorous pitcher plants (*Sarracenia purpurea* L.) and sundews (*Drosera* sp.), sedges in the genera *Carex* and *Rhynchospora,* sweet gale (*Myrica gale* L.), and cotton-grass (*Eriophorum* sp.). At this location *Calamagrostis pickeringii* appeared to have flowered earlier in the season. The remaining flowering culms were brown and withered, but they had a sufficient number of florets to allow us to conclusively determine that indeed this is the species we were searching for. We were not so successful at several other locations in the Adirondacks, and did not find this species again in New York. *Calamagrostis pickeringii* did not seem to be overly common.

The United States National Herbarium at the Smithsonian holds several historical collections of *Calamagrostis pickeringii* from Mt. Washington in the White Mountains in New Hampshire, and we decided that this would be a suitable area to sample. Most of these collections were made at the beginning of the last century and locality information was quite general; the most detailed information we had was "Lake of the Clouds, Mt. Washington" based on a 1901 collection. Our first day in the White Mountains National Forest we drove to the alpine summit of Mt. Washington (6288 ft) via the eight mile Mount Washington Auto Road, which opened to the public on 8 August 1861. Despite a thorough search of the *Carex*-dominated alpine meadows, we did not find *Calamagrostis pickeringii*, but collected other grasses and sedges, including tufted hair grass, Bigelow's sedge (*Carex bigelowii* Torr. ex Schwein), boreal bentgrass (*Agrostis mertensii* Trin.) and the common bluejoint reedgrass [*Calamagrostis canadensis* (Michx.) P. Beauv]. We observed many populations of *Calamagrostis canadensis*, and although we generally were quite certain that indeed that was the species we encountered (not *C. pickeringii* which we were specifically seeking), we spent considerable time carefully examining the minute florets to determine the length of the callus hairs, which is the main distinguishing factor between these two species. *Calamagrostis pickeringii* has very short callus hairs (< 1/4 the length of the lemma), whereas *C. canadensis* has long callus hairs that equal or exceed the length of the lemma.

Looking down from the Mt. Washington summit we could see the small Lakes of the Clouds, where *Calamagrostis pickeringii* had been collected over one hundred years earlier. The lake was just over one mile away, but time did not permit us to walk down and search the area. This would have to wait until the next day.

The Lakes of the Clouds atop Mt. Washington in New Hampshire, where Calamagrostis pickeringii *grows among the rocks.*

The night was warm and clear, so we slept in the open, shielded by just a rain tarp. The night was also windy—we were quickly woken at 4 am when one of the tarp ropes sprang free, sending half the tarp fluttering loudly in the wind. "The weakest link!" Paul exclaimed, as he bounded from his sleeping bag to re-peg the strap. With the tarp secure, we slept the remainder of the night without incident. In the morning, after a couple of hours processing our collections, we prepared to hike up to Lakes of the Clouds from the side of Mt. Washington opposite the heavily travelled auto road. We parked the truck at the Cog Railway Base Station, where tourists board an authentic, coal-burning passenger train that takes them to the summit of the mountain. We walked up the Ammonoosuc Ravine Trail, which ascends almost a kilometre in elevation over a short ~3 miles. The trail, decidedly not suitable for those interested in a leisurely walk, starts in rich, mesic woods carpeted with mosses

and lush vegetation, and eventually passes through a dwarf, subalpine forest dominated by krumholtz vegetation, including balsam fir [*Abies balsamea* (L.) Miller], birch (*Betula* sp.), low growing *Vaccinium* sp., and the ericaceous Labrador tea [*Rhododendron groenlandicum* (Oeder) Kron & Judd, formerly known as *Ledum groenlandicum* Oeder]. At the top of this trail, amidst signage indicating the fragility of the unique alpine environment, sits a welcoming hikers' shelter along the Appalachian Trail, adjacent to two small lakes—the Lakes of the Clouds. After a brief respite from the wind and cold in the hut, we began our determined search for *Calamagrostis pickeringii*. The meadows around the woods, somewhat sheltered by large rock outcrops, were dominated by several of the same species we had observed at the mountain summit one day earlier. After searching almost the entire general area around the lakes, and about to give up, I elatedly stumbled across a large population of the species growing along one side of the lake among the rocks. This

Paul Peterson strapping up our large plant press, immediately after processing our collections one morning.

grass was clearly locally abundant, but does not occur in other areas around the lake. The mountain climb was worth it. We made several collections, confirming that this beautiful native species has persisted here since the site was visited in 1901, alongside the well travelled Appalachian Trail and the heavily visited summit of Mt. Washington, one of the oldest man-made tourist attractions in America. It can only

be hoped that the species will persist in this fragile environment, under continued pressures from humans, as well as larger forces such as climate change. Our detailed collection information should allow researchers 100 years from now to locate the exact spot at which we collected the species.

Looking Forward

By the end of our two week trip we had travelled a substantial portion of the eastern United States along the Appalachian Mountain chain, from near the Canadian border in New Hampshire to the Tennessee/North Carolina border, and made many collections of *Calamagrostis* and many other grass species. We learned a lot about the *Calamagrostis* species that we were able to study in the field, and look forward to the insights that we will gain through detailed study of their morphology and DNA. Already, our preliminary data indicate that species of *Calamagrostis* in North America and those in Mexico are not closely related; in fact, those from Mexico should probably be recognized in a different genus altogether. But at this point such nomenclatural changes are premature and require increased sampling within *Calamagrostis* and among its relatives. This means more field trips will eventually be necessary to study the species in their native environments and to collect the requisite genetic material in our effort to understand the evolutionary history of this little studied group of grasses.

Acknowledgements

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A Window on the Longevity of Orchid Populations in Gatineau Park

Joyce M. Reddoch and Allan H. Reddoch

In 1895, The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club established a common study area for all fields of natural history. This area, the Ottawa District, is a 50-km-radius circle centred on the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. Since then, professionals and amateurs alike have published numerous studies on a variety of subjects "in the Ottawa District", including birds, amphibians, reptiles, butterflies, grasses, and lichens.

Within this tradition, Edward W. Greenwood founded the Native Orchid Location Survey in 1966 to search out and record orchid populations in order to provide a database for future scientific studies and conservation planning. In 30 years, members of the Survey, including us, recorded some 3500 sight records for 41 of the 43 known species. One of the two new Ottawa District species discovered by the Native Orchid Location Survey was Auricled Twayblade (*Listera auriculata*) in Gatineau Park (Greenwood 1968, MacKenzie and Greenwood 1969). A total of 36 orchid species have been found in the park.

Between 1966 and 1996 we monitored a number of orchid populations in Gatineau Park and elsewhere to collect data and life-history information for our monograph on the orchids in the Ottawa District (Reddoch and Reddoch 1997). After that, we continued to make detailed annual investigations of some populations (Reddoch and Reddoch 2005, 2007a, 2007b), and monitored others less intensively, recording only the numbers of plants/flowering stems or on an "are they still there?" basis. We visited all of the sites with the welfare of the habitats and plants uppermost in mind.

Population lifetimes of North American orchids generally are not well known (Light and MacConaill 2005). Under suitable conditions, we find that many orchid populations can persist for considerable lengths of time and, indeed, we realize that even the longest of our documented records may cover only a fraction of their lifetimes. For example, we have monitored the Rose Pogonia (*Pogonia ophioglossoides*) population listed below for 41 years (1967-2007), but there is evidence of its existence for at least a century before that. The early botanist and Club co-founder, James Fletcher, made a herbarium collection from that population in 1878.

Some populations are long-lived because the plants are long-lived, while others are long-lived although individual plants are short-lived. Other populations are short-lived with short-lived plants. In the long run, though, orchid populations can survive only as long as there are suitable habitats available. Habitats are not permanent but change as a result of succession, natural events (droughts, beaver flooding) and human intervention. And, speaking of human intervention, human activity can create orchid habitats, as well as destroy them, and discontinuing the maintenance of those habitats can mean the deaths of the orchids. For example, in Gatineau Park, the population of Case's Ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes casei*) listed below flourished only during the time that its field habitat was maintained by annual mowing.

Below we list our longest-observed populations for each of 22 species in Gatineau Park. Each population generally was less than 100 m in extent. The total lengths of the records were calculated from the earliest available evidence, which sometimes included herbarium collections or the reliable sight records of others.

In addition to the Gatineau Park records listed below, Marilyn Light and Michael MacConaill have been studying both a Yellow Lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *pubescens*) population and a Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine)* population since 1985 (Light and MacConaill 2005, 2006, personal communication). Monty Wood (personal communication) has kept an eye on a White Fringed-orchid (*Platanthera blephariglottis*) population on his property just north of Gatineau Park since he purchased it in 1970.

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Longest-observed Orchid Populations in Gatineau Park

Species	Total Lengths of Records (years)	Records by Other Observers	Our Monitoring Periods
Calopogon tuberosus	40+		1968–2007
Coeloglossum viride	7		1973–1979[1]
Corallorhiza maculata	33	1965 (AH)	1975–1997[1]
C. striata	32		1968–1999[1]
C. trifida	33		1968–2000[1]
Cypripedium acaule	40+		1968–2007
C. parviflorum var. *pubescens*	43+	1965 (EWG)	1968–2007
C. reginae	40+		1968–2007
Galearis spectabilis	39+	1969*	1973–2007
Goodyera pubescens	40+	1968* (Reddoch & Reddoch 2007a)	1975–2007
G. tesselata	29		1975–2003[1]
Liparis loeselii	39+		1969–2007
Listera auriculata	11	1967 (Greenwood 1968, McKenzie & Greenwood 1969)	1967–1977[1]
Platanthera aquilonis	15+		1993–2007
P. clavellata	40+		1968–2007
P. grandiflora	39+		1969–2007

Species	Total Lengths of Records (years)	Records by Other Observers	Our Monitoring Periods
Platanthera hookeri	29	(Reddoch & Reddoch 2007b)	1978–2006[1]
P. orbiculata	19		1969–1987[1]
P. psycodes	39+		1969–2007
Pogonia ophioglossoides	130+	1878* (Reddoch & Reddoch 1997, 2005)	1967–2007
Spiranthes casei	26		1981–2006[1]
S. lacera	29		1968–1996[1]

* herbarium specimen at the Vascular Plant Herbarium, Agriculture Canada, Ottawa (DAO)

[1] date after which population was no longer found

\+ populations that we are continuing to track

AH = the late Anne Hanes, personal communcation

EWG = the late Edward W. Greenwood, personal communications and his records in the Native Orchid Location Survey

Ottawa Book Launch: the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario

Christine Hanrahan

Atlas book launch crowd. Photo by Diane Lepage.

It was, in the words of one attendee, the greatest assembly of naturalist talent ever seen in the Ottawa area, and a big reunion of people with a passion for nature. On a cold, snowy evening, January 30, 2008, a festive and excited crowd of about 135 people turned out for the launch of the *Atlas of Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005*. To say that we awaited this day with anticipation would be an understatement. As one atlasser said, it was just like Christmas all over again. And I know exactly what he meant! No sooner did the doors open to the expectant crowds than lines eagerly formed at the table holding the pre-ordered books. It seems people couldn't wait any longer to get their hands on this wonderful book—and who could blame them!

The book launch was organized by the OFNC and held at the Canadian Museum of Nature, appropriately enough, next door to the Bird Gallery, to which attendees had free access. A continuous loop slide show, provided by Mike Cadman, played on three screens around the room. Guests sipped fruit punch, drank coffee, nibbled on an array of refreshments, caught up with old friends, some not seen for many years, and of course, eagerly perused the atlas.

Mike Cadman, Atlas Provincial Coordinator. Photo by Gord Belyea.

Chris Harris selling the atlas. Photo by Gord Belyea.

The evening began with a welcoming address from Maureen Dougan, Vice-President of the Canadian Museum of Nature, and continued with remarks from various of the partners involved in the atlas: Gregor Beck of the Atlas Management Board, also speaking for Bird Studies Canada; Virgina Poter, Director General of Canadian Wildlife Service; Jean Iron, Ontario Field Ornithologists; Chris Davies, Ministry of Natural Resources; and Cliff Bennett, Ontario Nature. The formal part of the evening wound up with Mike Cadman giving a fast-paced illustrated talk which discussed some of the interesting results from the five year project. Steve Wendt, our MC for the evening, did a great job of making

sure things moved along according to the agenda, including awarding prizes to winners of the bird quiz.

From L - R: Don Sutherland, Gregor Beck, Mike Cadman, Mike Runtz. Photo by Diane Lepage.

Three of the five atlas editors were in attendance, Mike Cadman, Gregor Beck and Don Sutherland. People lined up for a chance to exchange a few words with them and have their books signed. While most people had pre-ordered their atlas, quite a number of books were sold that evening, and the mountains of books piled on several tables, rapidly disappeared. Chris Harris, in charge of sales, and Claudia Burns, in charge of making sure that everyone who picked up their pre-ordered copy signed for it, were both kept busy for the entire evening. They barely had time to grab a drink, let alone relax. They really deserve a special thanks for their work, particularly since they were roped in at the last possible moment (in response to a frantic "help" from me!).

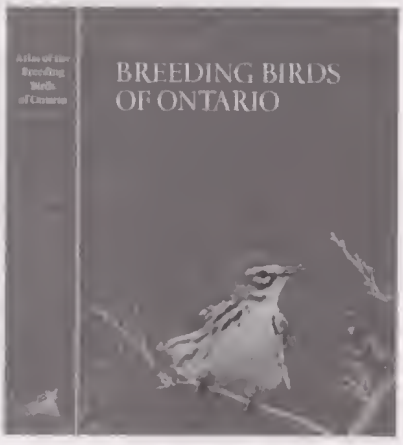
The publication of the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005*, is a seminal event in the annals of Ontario ornithology. The book, a whopping 706 pages, is a lavishly produced effort, with full colour maps and photos of each of the species, in some instances supplemented by further photos of the bird's habitat and nest. The first 53 pages discuss the biogeography of Ontario, changes in bird distribution in the province, the coverage and results of the five years of field work,

and lists of participants and regional coordinators. This atlas is far larger and much weightier than the first Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (1981-1985). It requires some strength to hoist it!

Christine Hanrahan, Regional Coordinator for the Ottawa area, discussing birds with Frank Pope and Ron Bedford. Photo by Gord Belyea.

Special acknowledgment and thanks must go to Mike Cadman who oversaw the entire Atlas from the Pilot Project in 2000, through the years of field work, to the completion of the book, a truly staggering accomplishment. He was the Provincial Coordinator for the atlas, and the main contact point for all volunteers. Atlassers in the Ottawa area got to know Mike well, as he made an annual spring visit along with Nicole Kopysh, Assistant Coordinator.

An event such as the atlas launch does not take place without the work of many, many people. First of all, we are deeply grateful to the Canadian Museum of Nature for providing the space for the event. I can't think of a better venue in Ottawa for celebrating the release of a book about birds! Museum staff worked hard to make sure the event ran smoothly and thanks are due to Anne Breau, Katja Rodriguez, Diane Mongrain and, Jason Coyle and Marc Diotte who provided the necessary technical expertise to keep things moving along. Steve Wendt kindly consented to serve as MC, and did an excellent job. Many OFNC members helped out in a variety of ways and without them, the book launch could not possibly have happened. Thanks are due to Ken and Ruth Allison, Claudia Burns, Christine Hanrahan, Chris Harris, Wayne Houston, Gillian



Marston, Frank Pope, and Eve Ticknor. Gord Belyea and Diane Lepage were photographers for the event, and I thank them for the photos used here.

Falcon Watch 2008

Eve Ticknor

Our 12th season monitoring our Peregrine Falcon family will soon be here. Each year volunteers take turns watching young falcons take their first steps in the world. See them take their wings and, just in case a little help is needed, someone will be there to make sure they get home safely.

Our season runs about three weeks during the second half of June. We work in small groups and no prior experience is necessary. The pay is nonexistent but the rewards are limitless. It is an opportunity to help an endangered species, to increase public awareness and learn about falcons. It may also be considered volunteer time for high school students aged 16 or older. More information and notes on previous watches can be found on the OFNC website (*www.ofnc.ca*). Just follow the links to the falcon watch.

If you have a few hours to give, please contact Eve Ticknor at 613-737-7551 or 613-859-9545 or by email at *sandbird@magma.ca*.

The Doug Tarry Bird Study Awards for Young Ornithologists

Long Point Bird Observatory

The Doug Tarry Bird Study Awards offers people aged 13-17 "hands-on" training in field ornithology. Participants are taught how to identify, age, and sex birds as well as learning about avian behaviours and population dynamics. Participants will also experience regular field trips, slide shows and some nocturnal field work. The workshop is 10 days long and is usually held late July or early August at the Long Point Bird Observatory.

The award covers accommodation, meals and travel costs while attending the workshop; however recipients are responsible for getting to and from Long Point.

Interested individuals can obtain complete information and application forms from either the website (*www.bsc.eoc.org/lpbo/yow.html*) or from Stuart MacKenzie at *lpbo@esc-eoc.org*.

Deadline for applications is 30 April.

Bird Highlights from the 50K 2007: The Last Six Months

Chris Lewis

Writing this in January, after snowfalls that broke the records (even before winter "officially" began!), it's a serious stretch of the memory to recall the hot dry summer of 2007, and the very pleasant fall that followed. But it's the changes in the seasons that can make living and birding in our part of the world so interesting and often full of surprises. The year 2007 turned out to be a great year, and the goal of finding 250 species in one year in the 50K was attained, and even surpassed, by several local birders who made the effort. Congratulations to those diligent (or mad) enough to do so! Here are some of the highlights from July - December.

Waterfowl

A couple of September records were set for the 50K: a **Greater White-fronted Goose** (13 Sept.) and a **Cackling Goose** (23-27 Sept.) were found at what has become one of the most intriguing locations for local birding away from the Ottawa River—a large quarry pond on the east side of Moodie Dr. south of the Trail Rd. landfill. This is an active, privately-owned sand and gravel operation and trespassing is *verboten*, but watching from the roadside gate has proved to be very productive. The challenge for spotting special birds here is not accessibility, it's trying to pick them out among the huge numbers of Canada Geese! **Snow Goose** numbers were nowhere near those seen at the end of 2006. Most arrived in groups of less than half a dozen and the largest flock was of "over 1000" birds near Casselman on 17 November. A juvenile **Ross's Goose** on 01 October was a surprise at an old degraded pond better known for dog-walking than bird-watching (the Bruce Pit on Cedarview Rd.), and found its way to the Moodie Dr. quarry as well as the

Richmond Conservation Area (former sewage lagoons) on Eagleson Rd. It remained at the Richmond lagoons until at least 5 October. Another juvenile **Ross's Goose** (the same bird?) was found at the Alfred sewage lagoons and nearby fields on 15-17 October. The Richmond site also hosted an adult **Tundra Swan** from 12-13 November. This former birding hot-spot seems to have become "hot" again!

Of course, the Ottawa River continues to be the premier location for waterfowl in our area. October is **"Brant month"** and several good-sized flocks totaling up to 1700 birds were seen on the 25th. Smaller groups continued to move through until the end of the month. For some reason, there is always a single Brant, usually a juvenile, that decides to linger at Andrew Haydon Park; this year one remained until 05 November, unwarily feeding among the ducks. The usual build-up of common puddle and diving ducks began on schedule, and some of the less common species such as **Canvasback** and **Redhead** were also noted in a variety of locations. The Alfred lagoons have become an established breeding area for the latter species in the past 10 years, as well as for the ever-growing population of **Ruddy Ducks** in Eastern Ontario.

Although Alfred is actually outside the 50K, it is always worth a mention in these summaries, and the recent construction of an impressive viewing platform at the lagoons has made them more accessible than ever before. Entrance to the lagoons themselves does, however, require the purchase of a permit from the Alfred-Plantagenet township office.

Two female Harlequin Ducks showed up on the Québec side of the river, just in time for the Ottawa-Gatineau Christmas Bird Count. First discovered on 09 December, at least one of them was seen on the count day (16 December) during what turned out to be one of the worst storms of the winter. Strong northeast winds and up to 40 cm of snow made this CBC memorable for its adversity. Even the post-count dinner was cancelled for the first time in 40 years! Well, we all survived and so did the Harlequins who were both still happily hanging out on the river above the Deschênes Rapids and below the Champlain bridge into the New Year. Up until the river froze in the first week of December, good numbers of **all three species of** scoters moved through and dropped in on the river. The annual appearance of **Barrow's Goldeneye** occurred again on both the Ottawa and Rideau Rivers; at least two males and one female were seen from 31 October onward, and a hybrid male **Common X Barrow's** (possibly the same bird that wintered in Ottawa for the past three years) also showed up in the second week of December.

Gallinaceous Birds, Loons & Grebes, Gannets, Pelicans, Herons & Rails
The agricultural areas and a few suburban areas in our region continue to be reliable for finding **Gray Partridge** and **Wild Turkeys**. As noted in other recent *T&L* bird

summaries, the former species is declining due to increasing land development, whereas the latter is almost ubiquitous now. Record high numbers of turkeys were tallied on both the Dunrobin-Breckenridge (22 December) and Carleton Place (27 December) Christmas Bird Counts. A few **Red-throated Loons** made their annual visit to the Ottawa River in late October and early November, and an unprecedented number of **Eared Grebes**—a group of **six**—were first noted at the Alfred lagoons on 27 September and remained here until at least 31 October.

November 15 was an exciting day when a juvenile **Northern Gannet** was spotted flying over the Ottawa River at Andrew Haydon Park and then heading inland. The typical pattern for these maritime strays has been to just continue heading up the river, rarely to be seen again. In this case, the bird ended up at the Moodie Dr. pond and was seen sleeping amongst the geese until it drifted out of sight. Whether or not this bird survived to carry on its journey will never be known. Also very rare in our area was an adult **American White Pelican** at Parc National du Plaisance on 22 July; an adult seen flying past the Gatineau River as well as Shirleys Bay back in early June may have been the same bird.

In the heron department, **Least Bitterns** were again found in traditional breeding areas such at the Constance Creek wetland and the Marais aux Grenouillettes. **Great Egrets** arrived in small numbers throughout the summer and lingered until mid-September in several locations on both the Ontario and Québec sides. A **Cattle Egret** was a one-day wonder on 21 October at a horse farm west of Navan. **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were, as usual, seen at Mud Lake in the Britannia Conservation Area as well as other locations such as Strathcona Park and the Bruce Pit, and a juvenile in the Ring-billed Gull colony at Deschênes in mid-July indicated success for the pair of adults that nested here last spring. Noteworthy for the rail records was a high count of **76 Sandhill Cranes** on 31 October in the fields between Navan and Carlsbad Springs, and at least 65 were still around until mid-November.

Raptors

Eagles always capture our attention, and although Ottawa never sees large numbers during fall migration, the autumn hawk watches along the Great Lakes in southern Ontario again reported good numbers of both **Bald** and **Golden Eagles**, reflecting the continued success of both species. Bald Eagles in particular have been attracted to Ottawa-Gatineau, especially the Gatineau hills, as a wintering area. No modern breeding records have yet been confirmed for the 50K, but a pair of adults seen together several times in early July at Lac Lapêche was certainly an interesting observation, as was a pair seen in the Shirleys Bay area in late winter, the same location where a pair over-wintered last year. An extremely late **Osprey** was still fishing at Shirleys Bay on 15 November, and a **Red-shouldered Hawk** was a

regular sight along Old Carp Rd. from 22 December to the end of the month and beyond; this is very near the location where one was found back in January of 1998. The arrival of **Rough-legged Hawks** in the fall seemed to indicate that this would be a good winter for them in our area, but very few stuck around. **Merlins** once again outnumbered **American Kestrels**, as has been the trend over the past 10 years. **Peregrine Falcons** (a few migrants as well as the adult breeding pair) were noted throughout the period, and it never ceases to be an awesome sight to witness both Merlins and Peregrines zooming in on the shorebirds that congregate along the Ottawa River during migration. Which brings us to . . .

Shorebirds

Although the local sewage lagoons can be magnets for migrant shorebirds, this season the best habitat by far was the shoreline of the Ottawa River. Water levels remained very low until well into November and attracted a total of 23 species including **American Golden Plover**, **Whimbrel**, and **Red Knot**. Interesting species away from the river included a record late **Semipalmated Plover** at a pond on Giroux Rd. north of Navan on 10 November, several **Upland Sandpipers** south of Munster and near St. Albert on 05 and 16 August respectively, a **Long-billed Dowitcher** at the Moodie Dr. pond from 30 September - 02 October, a **Red-necked Phalarope** at the Casselman lagoons on 11 August, and a record late **Wilson's Phalarope** also at Casselman on 21 October. The last shorebirds to move through are usually **Purple Sandpipers**, who typically choose the worst weather to do so. This year was no exception—on 21 November during one of the nastier days of the month, 14 flew by Britannia Bay and landed on the rock jetties; at least two remained to ride out the first snow storm of the season the following day.

Larids

The season started with a big bang for gull-watchers and continued to delight and surprise as it went on. Perhaps the most thrilling bird of the entire year was an adult **Long-tailed Jaeger** (the first 50K record in 20 years) on the Ottawa River off Andrew Haydon Park on 11 August. This spectacular pirate from the far north wowed observers on both the 11th and 12th with its aggressive harassment of *anything* on the river—not only the ducks and gulls, but even a **Great Blue Heron**, an **Osprey**, and a **Caspian Tern** were fair game! An adult **California Gull** was also a great find; first seen at the Moodie Dr. pond on 06 November, likely the same bird was seen later at Shirleys Bay on the 15th. A month earlier, a juvenile **Sabine's Gull** was enjoyed by many on 12-13 September. Farther afield near Pembroke, a third-winter **Slaty-backed Gull** was a phenomenal discovery on 20 November and was seen feeding at Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre until the 25th. **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** are increasing annually and may now be seen in *any* season. A probable record high one-day count was 27 individuals on 02 October, all in the

vicinity of the Moodie Dr. pond and adjacent fields. An adult **Thayer's Gull** was found on the Ottawa River on 16 October, and a couple of others were reported later in the season as well. The first reports of **Iceland** and **Glaucous Gulls** came in on 08 November, and several were seen roosting on the river ice after winter arrived in earnest.

Cuckoos, Owls & Woodpeckers

Cuckoos are strange birds. They usually refuse to respond to any attempts at getting them to call or move into view, and they often sit in total silence and inertia, defying us to spot them. When they do choose to call, it's usually out of the blue, at any time of day, for no apparent reason. Furthermore, both **Black-billed** and **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** often copy each other's calls, causing consternation among those looking for the latter species, which is still quite rare in our area. Every once in a while, one will appear like magic in the most unexpected places—as was the case when one materialized on a golf course on 23 July, right in front of a birder who happened to be golfing, not birding, that day. Similarly, **owls** are notorious for being hard to find and usually it takes a lot of patience and experience to do so . . . and then, as with cuckoos, sometimes we just get lucky. Two **Eastern Screech Owls** were found on the evening of 24 October along Cumberland Ridge Rd., and another was found in the Aylmer, Québec area on 22 December. **Great Horned Owls** may have bred again in the Britannia woods in 2007. No nest was ever reported, but hearing their calls (in mid-afternoon on at least one occasion) confirmed their continuing presence here. The first **Snowy Owl** of the season appeared east of Casselman on 06 December, and three were in this area from mid-December to early January 2008. But none were seen in other areas, for possibly the same reason that Rough-legged Hawks didn't linger—lack of meadow voles. **Barred Owls**, however, were surprisingly accommodating in the vicinity of Shirleys Bay in December, but (like Screech and Great Horned Owls) this species is known to have a much more varied diet. A **Short-eared Owl** on the move in mid-November was kept moving by American Crows, and single **Long-eared** and **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were seen from the third week of October to the first week of November in the Clyde Ave. woods.

The breeding pair of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** in Constance Bay fledged at least two young; this was their sixth consecutive successful season here. A very late **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** found at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden on 13 December was still present in the nearby Arboretum of the Central Experimental Farm on the 18th. A couple of **Black-backed Woodpeckers**—a male migrating through Britannia on 16 October, and a female in Gatineau Park on 24 November—were the only "northern" woodpeckers reported this season.

Passerines

The post-breeding dispersal and first indications of fall songbird migration began in late July, and by the end of August the majority of the expected species of **flycatchers, vireos, kinglets, thrushes** and **warblers** had passed through, along with good numbers of **Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** and **Baltimore Orioles**. Some of the more uncommon migrants such as a **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** (Shirleys Bay, 24 August) and a **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** (Andrew Haydon Park, 28 September - 02 October) were noteworthy, as were some of our less common breeding species, including **Yellow-throated Vireos** (Larose Forest and Lac Philippe in late July) and the eastern or "yellow" race of **Palm Warbler** which successfully produced young again in the Mer Bleue bog. Four **Carolina Wrens** popped up in different residential neighbourhoods from mid-July through the end of December, and three **Northern Mockingbirds** also appeared in suburban locations. At least one of the wrens seemed to favour the backyards along the recreational pathway east of Andrew Haydon Park and was still quite vocal in early November. And speaking of neighbourhood fidelity, a mockingbird seen behind Nestow Dr. in mid-November and again in the new year may have been the same bird that was found at this very same location back in spring of 2006. Unlike other birds that have declined or increased in Ottawa, the status of these two species seems to have remained virtually unchanged.

In the first week of December, a very late **Gray Catbird** found a feeder on Goodin St. in Constance Bay and remained a cool but evidently comfortable customer through at least the early part of 2008. From 21 December to the year's end and beyond a **Townsend's Solitaire** graced the Parkwood Hills area, and a **Tufted Titmouse** on Manitou St. in Forest Park, Embrun (of Yellow-headed Blackbird fame) very busily visited feeders on the 22 December and remained into the new year as well. Another Gray Catbird and three different **Hermit Thrushes** were also late lingerers in December. An **Oregon Junco** (a form of Dark-eyed Junco common in western North America but rare in our neck of the woods) was discovered at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden on the Central Experimental Farm on 11 November, and was also seen regularly frequenting the Fletcher feeders through the end of the period.

And finally . . . the birds we'd all been waiting for . . . the "erratics!" In the early months of 2008 an influx of **Red** and **White-winged Crossbills** and **Pine Siskins** provided some entertainment for winter-weary birders, but conspicuous by their virtual absence in the 50K in recent years were **Bohemian Waxwings, Pine Grosbeaks, Common Redpolls** and **Evening Grosbeaks**. Then, in October, they began to invade. Their numbers continued to increase exponentially as the season wore on, and they (as well as at least **4 Hoary Redpolls** in mid to late December)

helped to make birding in winter in the 50K interesting—and even fun—as we headed into another New Year . . . when every bird is "new" again!

The information in this article was derived from reports to the OFNC Bird Status Line, personal observations and communications, as well as postings to the Ontario Field Ornithologists listserve ONTBIRDS. The Bird Status Line is updated weekly (phone 613-860-9000) and transcripts as well as a wealth of other information about birding in the Ottawa area are available on the OFNC web site *www.ofnc.ca*. Another highly recommended internet resource is the NEILYWORLD web site by Larry Neily. For information about birds in the Gatineau (Outaouais) area, contact the Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais at 819-778-0737 or visit *http:\\coo.ncf.ca*.

Pollinator Workshop Opportunity

As many people are aware, pollinators of all kinds are under threat: honey bees across North America and elsewhere are dying from Colony Collapse Disorder, and wild bee species and other pollinating insects are also disappearing. In an effort to understand what is happening, a new national Pollinator Monitoring programme has been established to document the status and activity of native wild insect pollinators.

The Canadian Biodiversity Institute in partnership with the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, and with the sponsorship of the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, is offering a free pollinator workshop to provide basic training in recognizing the more common wild bee and fly pollinators in the Ottawa area. The workshop will be given by Dr. Jim Dyer who has been instrumental in developing the monitoring programme for Environment Canada. Jim has many years of experience in this field and offers good instruction (aimed at an adult audience) on the topic. Fletcher Wildlife Garden provides an excellent venue with habitat for a wide range of insect pollinators and June is the perfect month to find many species busy at work among the flowering plants and bushes. If you would like to join us for the workshop please contact Heather Hamilton at 613-826-2190 or *hhamilton@magma.ca* (Indicate a subject line of Pollinator Workshop so you don't get lost in spam). Please see coming events for more details.

Ottawa Wildlife Festival in the Ottawa-Gatineau area April 5 - May 31, 2008

Saturdays and Sundays, April 5-6, April 12-13, April 19-20 and April 26-27, Canadian Museum of Nature, 240 McLeod Street (at Metcalfe), Ottawa. The Canadian Museum of Nature celebrates National Wildlife Week with storytelling, theatre and dance. Join us each weekend in April for performances inspired by the miracle of pollination. Information: (613) 566-4729.

Tuesday, April 8, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: Ottawa Public Library–Orléans, 1705 Orléans Boulevard, Orléans. French Presentation: Jean Lauriault, Environmental Specialist for the Canadian Centre for Biodiversity at the Canadian Museum of Nature and the lead for Canada on the Canada/Mexico/USA Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management's Monarch Butterfly Advisory Group will present: Monarch Butterflies: Biology, Milkweed and Predators. His talk will include pictures, specimens and personal anecdotes from his numerous trips to the monarch over-wintering sanctuaries in the Oyamel fir forests of Mexico. Information and Registration: (613) 824-1962.

Wednesday, April 9, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: Ottawa Public Library–Sunnyside, 1049 Bank Street, Ottawa. Roy John, Canadian Field-Naturalist's Book Review Editor and ardent eco-traveller, shares an account of his travels to Russia and Alaska as he takes us on a visit to the Bering Sea, not under the ferocious conditions of the Deadliest Catch, but in the foggy mild days of summer. Look at some of the lovely and unique flowers that can be found on the multitude of islands. Find out about the many birds, especially the Alcids, and the mammals that inhabit this remote area. Information and Registration: (613) 730-1082.

Thursday, April 10, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: Ottawa Public Library–Elmvale Acres, 1910 St. Laurent Boulevard, Ottawa. Max Finkelstein, spokesman for the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, Canada's national river conservation program, will take you on a journey to discover Water, Earth and Sky—Canoeing a Continent: On the Trail of Alexander Mackenzie, the story of three summers spent retracing the route of Alexander Mackenzie from Ottawa to the Pacific coast in a canoe on the first Trans-Continental route, providing glimpses of the tapestry of land and waterscapes,

rivers and watersheds, cultures and communities that make up this nation. Registration: (613) 738-0619.

Monday, April 14, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: Ottawa Public Library–Ruth E. Dickinson, 100 Malvern, Nepean. Maria MacRae, Canadian Wildlife Federation's expert wildlife gardener, lets us in on her secrets to finding "Pollinators in Your Garden". Pollinators are a very important part of our environment and help provide us with many of the products we need to survive, from the fruit you have at breakfast to the cotton pajamas you put on to go to bed. This talk will share ideas on how you can create a beautiful garden that will also support a diversity of fascinating pollinators. Information and Registration: (613) 580-2796.

Tuesday, April 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: Ottawa Public Library—Carlingwood, 281 Woodroffe Avenue, Ottawa. Have you heard arctic travelers speak of being above the "bug line," implying they should leave their bug jackets at home if they are far enough north? If there is a northern limit to insects, one would hypothesize that plants growing north of this line would be pollinated only by other means (wind, water, or other animals). Laurie Consaul, Canadian Museum of Nature, will show how Arctic plant species are pollinated, including a comparison of the distributions of potential pollinators to plant distributions, seeking explanations for the distribution of our Canadian Arctic plant species in: Arctic Pollination Above and Below the "Bug-Line. Information and Registration: (613) 725-2449.

Wednesday, April 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: Ottawa Public Library—Hazeldean, 50 Castlefrank Road, Kanata. Roy John, Canadian Field-Naturalist's Book Review Editor and ardent eco-traveller, shares an account of his travels to Peru. Journey to the ancient land of the Incas with its bleak deserts and lush forests. Peru has about the best diversity of bird species in the world, so you can see penguins and parrots within a relatively short distance. It also has great botany and impressive historical sights. The people are a colourful blend of the Inca and colonial Spanish cultural traits and you can order deep-fried guinea pig or chicken! Information and Registration: (613) 836-1900.

Friday, April 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: Stony Swamp Parking Lot #8, Moodie Drive, south of Hunt Club, Nepean. Family Nature Walk at Stony Swamp: Naturalist Martha Webber will encourage participants to discover the wonders of the night sounds and sights of nature in spring. Information: (613) 839-5217.

Friday, April 18 (English) and Friday, April 25 (French), 7-10 p.m.: Gatineau Park Visitors Centre, 33 Scott Road, Chelsea QC. Friends of Gatineau Park present The Dusk Series 2008—Frog Chorus: When day becomes night, when so many animals wake, when the sun gives way to the moon and stars, it's the Dusk Series in

Gatineau Park! Join Rob Alvo, an amphibian specialist, as he presents slides on these vocal amphibians and introduces us to their different songs. Afterwards, we will go into the Park, enjoy the concert and identify who is who! All participants will receive a free CD with frog calls from the Frogwatch Programme! Adults $15 (Members $12), Seniors/Students $12 (Members $10), Children $5. Information and Registration: (819) 827-2020 *http://www.friendsofgatineaupark.ca.*

Saturday, April 19, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.: RA Centre, 2451 Riverside Drive, Ottawa. Eco-Stewardship Fair: Celebrating Green Living Ideas, Products and Services. Green living has never been easier given the exciting new products and services available in the Nation's capital! The 2008 Ottawa Eco-Stewardship Fair is an opportunity for the public to find out how to help the planet, save dollars, and improve health by exploring exhibits under several themes, including: health, beauty and fashion, local food, eco-tourism and lifestyle, home and garden, nature, transportation, and energy. There will be food demonstrations, product displays and children's activities. An informative and fun filled day for the whole family to enjoy! Free admission. Information: *www.ottawaecofair.ca* (613) 230-3292.

Sunday, April 20, 10 a.m.-Noon: Alba Wilderness School, Lanark: Nature Hike to Blue Berry Mountain: 5 km interpretive hike to the top of Blue Berry Mountain, the highest lookout in the area. Dramatization of the life of John Muir, famous adventurous conservationist with a natural scientific focus, and naturalist's ability to commune deeply with nature. Donations appreciated. Information and registration (613) 259-3412.

Sunday, April 20, 1-3 p.m.: Ottawa Forests and Greenspace Alliance leads A Walk in the Woods. Naturalists' delight! Host to Ottawa's largest stand of old growth trees and one of the most diverse turtle communities found within an urban environment, the Medeola Woods also boasts an impressive network of wetlands, woods and meadows. Not to be missed! Dress appropriately. Free. Information: *www.ofnc.ca/ofgac.*

Wednesday, April 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: Ottawa Public Library—Alta Vista, 2516 Alta Vista Drive, Ottawa. Tony Beck, acclaimed wildlife photographer and naturalist, guides you through the fundamentals of beginning birdwatching. (613) 737-2837.

Thursday, April 24, 7:30 a.m.: Jack Pine Trail Parking Lot, Moodie Drive, South of Hunt Club, Nepean. Tony Beck's Guided Nature Walk at the Jack Pine Trail: Early spring field trip for adults into one of Ottawa's most diverse natural areas. Experience marsh, forest and field as they awaken from winter. Bring waterproof footwear, binoculars and insect repellant. Dress for weather. $10 fee fundraiser for

Wild Bird Care Centre. Information and reservations: (613) 828-2849.

Friday, April 25, 7:30 a.m.: Mer Bleue Boardwalk Parking Lot at end of Ridge Rd., east of Anderson Rd., Ottawa. Tony Beck's Guided Nature Walk at Mer Bleue Bog: early spring field trip for adults into one of Ottawa's most unique natural habitats. Experience the bog and surrounding environments after the spring thaw. Amphibians and insects come out of hibernation while migratory birds arrive from the south. Bring waterproof footwear, binoculars and insect repellant. Dress for weather. $10 fee fundraiser for the Wild Bird Care Centre. Information and reservations: (613) 828-2849.

Saturday, April 26, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.: Open House at Wolf Grove Woods. Explore the woods and harvest wild edible plants with botanist, Martha Webber. Bring a lunch and supplement from the wild. Meet at Metcalfe Park in Almonte. Information: (613) 839-5217.

Saturday, April 26, 8-10 a.m.: Down to Earth Gardens, 420 Haskins Road, Burritts Rapids South between Merrickville and Kemptville, off Highway 43 and Burritts Rapids Road. Birding 101 Along the Old Stagecoach Trail: Explore nature's haven for bird watchers along the historic Old Stagecoach Trail with John Mackenzie, retired MNR wildlife technician, and Patti Pokorchak of Down to Earth Gardens. Information and registration: *patti@storm.ca* (613) 269 2687. *www.downtoearthgardens.ca.*

Monday, April 28, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: Ottawa Public Library—Centrepointe, 101 Centrepointe Drive, Nepean. Maria MacRae, Canadian Wildlife Federation's expert wildlife gardener, lets us in on her secrets to finding "Pollinators in Your Garden." Pollinators are a very important part of our environment and help provide us with many of the products we need to survive, from the fruit you have at breakfast to the cotton pajamas you put on to go to bed. This talk will share ideas on how you can create a beautiful garden that will also support a diversity of fascinating pollinators. Information and Registration: (613) 580-2710.

Tuesday, April 29, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: Ottawa Public Library–St. Laurent, 515 Côté, Ottawa. Jean Lauriault, Environmental Specialist for the Canadian Centre for Biodiversity at the Canadian Museum of Nature and the lead for Canada on the Canada/Mexico/USA Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management's Monarch Butterfly Advisory Group will present: Monarch Butterflies: Biology, Milkweed and Predators. His talk will include pictures, specimens and personal anecdotes from his numerous trips to the monarch over-wintering sanctuaries in the Oyamel fir forests of Mexico. Information and Registration: (613) 824-1962.

Wednesday, April 30, 6-9:30 p.m.: Canadian Museum of Nature, 240 McLeod Street (at Metcalfe). Forum on Pollinators–for food. For the future. The three topics for the evening are: gardening (creating a garden for pollinators), agriculture (the dependency of many types of food production (e.g. apples) on successful pollination), and natural environment (restoration of natural areas with a focus on pollinators and the plants they require for survival). Information tables, displays, handouts, and refreshments. Free admission. Organized by The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club/Fletcher Wildlife Garden, the Canadian Museum of Nature, Parks Canada, the Ottawa Stewardship Council and the Wildlife Festival. Information: (613) 831-2253.

Saturday, May 3, 8 a.m.: Entrance to the Britannia Filtration Plant on Cassels Street, Ottawa. Dave Moore and Bev McBride, members of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, will be leading a half-day, general interest nature walk through the Britannia Conservation Area, a 40-hectare site along the Ottawa River near the Britannia Filtration Plant. Centred in this area is Mud Lake, around which the trails wander through both coniferous and deciduous forests, fields and scrub. This area is noted for its biodiversity and multitude of habitats—some natural, some man made. More species of birds have been found in this area than in any other area in Ottawa, and it is accessible by bus! Limited to 15 participants. Information and Registration: (613) 729-9330 *mooredw@vif.com*.

Saturday, May 10, 10 a.m.-Noon: Fletcher Wildlife Garden, Prince of Wales Drive (Experimental Farm), Ottawa. International Migratory Bird Day: Guided birding walk, free refreshments, displays and handouts. Information: (613) 234-6767.

Coming Events

arranged by the Excursions & Lectures Committee.
For further information,
call the Club number (613-722-3050).

Times stated for excursions are departure times. Please arrive earlier; leaders start promptly. If you need a ride, don't hesitate to ask the leader. Restricted trips will be open to non-members only after the indicated deadlines.

ALL OUTINGS: *Please bring a lunch on full-day trips and dress according to the weather forecast and activity. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes are essential on all birding trips. Unless otherwise stated, transportation will be by car pool.*

REGISTERED BUS TRIPS: *Make your reservation for Club bus excursions by sending a cheque or money order (Payable to The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club) to Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Z 1A2, at least ten days in advance. Include your name, address, telephone number and the name of the outing. Your cooperation is appreciated by the Committee so that we do not have to wait to the last moment to decide whether a trip should be cancelled due to low registration. In order for the Club to offer a bus trip, we need just over 33 people to register. If fewer than 30 register, we have the option of cancelling the trip or increasing the cost. Such decisions must be done a week in advance so we encourage anyone who is interested in any bus trip to register as early as possible. We also wish to discourage postponing the actual payment of bus fees until the day of the event.*

EVENTS AT THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE: *The Club is grateful to the Museum for their cooperation, and thanks the Museum for the use of these excellent facilities. Monthly meetings are held* in **The Discovery Zone Theatre on the 4th Floor.** Attendees may have to pay $5 parking per vehicle.

BIRD STATUS LINE: *Phone 613-860-9000 to learn of recent sightings or birding potential in the Ottawa area. To report recent sightings use the 613-860-9000 number and stay on the line. This service is run on behalf of the Birds Committee and is available to members and non-members.*

Saturday
5 April
2:00 p.m.
to
about
5:00 p.m.

PETROLOGY WORKSHOP FOR BEGINNERS
Leader: Geoff Burbidge
Location: Fletcher Wildlife Garden Activity Centre, east side of Prince of Wales Drive, south of the traffic circle.
(Second workshop.) This will be a hands-on workshop on basic rock identification. Having learned about minerals, the building-blocks of rocks, at the mineralogy workshop could be helpful, but not essential. Geof will provide sample rocks for study. He invites participants to bring a maximum of two of their most noteworthy rock samples for identification, should time permit. Please bring pencils and a couple of sheets of notepaper, and also a penknife, magnifying glass and a small magnet on a string if you have these items. This workshop is limited to 15 participants.
REGISTER WITH THE CLUB NUMBER 613-722-3050.

Sunday
6 April
6:30 a.m.
to
6:30 p.m.

SPRING BIRDING AT PRESQU'ILE
Leaders: Tom Hanrahan and David Britton
Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond at Assaly Road near Pizza Pizza. This traditional outing to Presqu'ile Provincial Park offers an ideal opportunity to study the diverse assortment of water fowl that congregate in the surrounding waters during their northward migration. Transportation is by motor coach equipped with washroom. Bring a lunch. We usually stop for coffee going and on the return trip home. Dress appropriately for the weather. The cost is $38 per person and covers entrance fee to Presqu'ile.
REGISTER EARLY.

Tuesday
8 April
7:00 p.m.
Social

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING
LIVING UNDER THE ICE: DESTRUCTION AND OPPORTUNITY ON THE POLAR SEAFLOOR
Speaker: Kathy Conlan
Location: Canadian Museum of Nature (VMMB), Metcalfe and McLeod Sts, The Discovery Zone Theatre, 4th Floor.

7:30 p.m.
Speaker

For polar marine life, sea ice is a seasonal platform that can act as insulator, highway, prison, sunscreen, pollutant collector, drinking water, food supply, sanctuary, lake shore, and a plough. Kathy Conlan will give an underwater tour showing how marine life use the sea ice in the Arctic and Antarctic and what are the threats of climate warming. She will show what her research on the ecology of disturbance has demonstrated about polar adaptations. She will reveal new under-ice discoveries that acoustic technology is making possible and show the amazing diversity of life that is within a diver's reach in the Antarctic.

Saturday
12 April
7:30 a.m.
to
about
10:30 a.m.

BEGINNER'S BIRD WALK AT MUD LAKE
Leader: Bev McBride
Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond at Assaly Road near Pizza Pizza (or about 7:45 a.m. at the Britannia filtration plant entrance).
Join Bev on an informal birding walk in one of Ottawa's premier birding spots.

Sunday
13 April
7:30 p.m.
to
11:00 p.m.

Rain date:
Sun
20 April

BIRDS AND AMPHIBIANS AT NIGHT
Leader: Bernie Ladouceur
Meet: Tim Hortons, south side of Robertson Rd. (Old Hwy. 7) between the Richmond Rd. turnoff and Moodie Drive in Bells Corners.
Participants have an opportunity to locate and identify nocturnal birds and amphibians such as the Great Horned, Barred, and Eastern Screech Owl, American Woodcock, Common Snipe, Ruffed Grouse, Chorus Frog, Spring Peeper, Wood and Leopard Frogs. Possible areas to visit include Richmond and Munster or areas south and/or west of Bells Corners. This outing is limited to 20. **REGISTER WITH THE CLUB NUMBER 613-722-3050.**

Saturday
19 April
6:00 a.m.
to
6:00 p.m

DERBY HILL HAWKWATCH
Leader: Roy John
Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, NE corner of the parking lot by Pizza Pizza. We leave promptly at 6 a.m.
Derby Hill is the site of an excellent spring hawk migration (*http://www.derbyhill.org/DHBO/Welcome.html*). Hawk watching is very weather dependent so it is always a gamble. It can be fantastic though, with anywhere from a few hundred to several thousand hawks in a day. It is a long drive (4 hours +) so please come prepared with a full tank of fuel and your lunch. You will also need a passport or two pieces of photo ID for the border crossing (Derby Hill is in New York state). If you have questions about this event, please call Roy John at 613-748-9963. We will be car pooling as much as possible so if you are on your own, please come prepared to join someone else. If you have walkie talkies, please bring to keep in touch during the drive. Some people may want to increase their odds of getting a good day of hawk watching in. If you are considering staying an extra day, let Roy know and he will put you in touch with others who may be doing the same. Whether you go for a day or two, it should be a lot of fun. Roy will only be leading the event on Saturday but there is a good chance a few people will stay on until Sunday.

Saturday
19 April
2:00 p.m.
to
about
5:00 p.m.

PALEONTOLOGY WORKSHOP FOR BEGINNERS

Leaders: Chris Hinsperger and Geof Burbidge

(Last of the three spring Workshops) Chris Hinsperger is owner of the Bonnechere Caves near Eganville, and a keen fossil hunter and collector. He will have some spectacular fossils from the Eganville area and invites participants to bring two of their most noteworthy samples for identification, should time permit. Please bring along a magnifying glass. After this workshop you will not look at fossils in quite the same way ever again. This workshop is limited to 20 participants. **PLEASE REGISTER WITH THE CLUB NUMBER 613-722-3050.**

Saturday
26 April
3:00 p.m.

DEDICATION PERGOLA IN MEMORY OF EILEEN EVANS

Location: Fletcher Wildlife Garden, Interpretive Centre, off Prince of Wales Drive.

We invite all who knew Eileen Evans to join us at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden, for a dedication of the new pergola, in her memory. Please RSVP before April 18, 2008, so we will know how many are attending. You may do so by phoning the Fletcher Wildlife Garden at 613-234-6767, or by emailing Christine at *vanessa@magma.ca*.

Saturday
26 April
7:30 p.m.

OFNC SOIRÉE

Meet: St. Basil's Church, off Maitland, just north of the Queensway.

Let's Party! Come for an evening of fun and celebration at our annual Club event when we honour hard-working OFNC members, creative Macoun Field-Club members, conservation efforts and the teaching of natural history. Artists in all media (including photography) are invited to submit their work for display and for prizes. Once again we shall be having a silent and regular auction and we solicit donations of books and other items relating to natural history. Call Phil Jeffreys (613-721-0139) for information regarding displays or Fenja Brodo (613-723-2054) regarding auction items and other questions.

Saturday	**MIGRATORY BIRD DAY**
10 May	**Location**: Fletcher Wildlife Garden, off Prince of Wales Drive.
10:00 a.m.	Join us in our annual celebration to welcome back migratory birds.
to	Take part in a guided birding walk around the varied habitats of
12 noon	the Fletcher Wildlife Garden (FWG), with expert birder, Peter Fuller. Pick up free information on birds and birding, and explore the 2008 International Migratory Bird Day theme of "Tundra to the Tropics: Connecting Birds, Habitats and People." Discover how the different habitats at FWG can offer migratory birds food, shelter and nesting sites. Free refreshments provided. For more information, contact Christine at *vanessa@magma.ca*.

Tuesday	**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING**
13 May	**DIVERSITY OF THE WORLD' S BATS**
7:00 p.m.	**Speaker**: Donald A. Smith
Social	**Location**: Canadian Museum of Nature (VMMB), Metcalfe and
7:30 p.m.	McLeod Streets, The Discovery Zone Theatre, 4th Floor.
Speaker	Bats are the only flying mammals and with nearly 1000 living species make up between 20-25 % of living mammalian species. They inhabit all continents but Antarctica and their diversity is greatest in tropical and subtropical regions. Dr. Smith's "show-and-tell" presentation using museum study skins will illustrate adaptations of some basic structures of the wings, tails, faces, ears, and teeth of megabats and most of the 17 families of microbats for locomotion, echolocation, and foraging for different foods. These include insects, fruits, nectar, pollen, fishes, frogs, small mammals (including bats), and blood! His specimens also illustrate the wide range of sizes among bats and some spectacular even bizarre appearances.

Thursday	**EARLY EVENING WALK AT THE FLETCHER**
15 May	**Leader**: Dave Moore
6:30 p.m.	**Meet**: Fletcher Wildlife Garden, Interpretive Centre, off Prince of Wales Drive
	This informal walk is offered to expand members' general knowledge of local natural history. Children are most welcome. Bring waterproof footwear and insect repellent.

Saturday
17 May
9:30 a.m.
to
about
noon

Rain date:
Saturday
24 May

SPRING WILDFLOWERS IN SOUTH GLOUCESTER NATURAL AREAS

Leader: Albert Dugal

Meet: Giant Tiger parking lot, northeast corner of the Blossom Park Shopping Centre, west side of Bank Street, 2.2 km. south of the Bank Street-Hunt Club Rd. intersection. The last street before the shopping centre is Queensdale Ave.

Participants will have the opportunity to see a wide variety of spring wildflowers (and also to peek at the damage being inflicted by development on some of the City of Ottawa's most sensitive ecological areas). Bring your wildflower guides, and other identification tools, as well as waterproof footwear and insect repellent. Call Albert at 613-821-1236 for trip confirmation.

Tuesday
20 May
9:00 a.m.

HISTORICAL WALK IN LAROSE FOREST

Leaders: Alexandra de Quimper and Christine Hanrahan

Meet: The Fletcher Wildlife Garden off Prince of Wales Drive (or at 10:00 a.m. at the Grant Cemetery in Larose Forest on Grant Rd.).

Alexandra is a local historian with a special interest in Larose Forest. She has done extensive exploration of the old Grant Settlement that once existed in this area. She will take us on a "Walk and Talk" pointing out where various buildings, such as the old cheese factory, once stood. History will come alive as we learn in vivid detail what life was like at the turn of the 20th Century. After a tour around the beautiful little cemetery, where the foundations of the old church stand, we will have lunch. Afterwards, we will walk along a forest road to the site of the old schoolhouse. On the way back to the meeting place, we will look and listen for the sights and sounds of the forest. Fairy Shrimp, frogs and salamanders may be found in vernal pools and, depending on the weather, we should see many migratory birds. The round trip will be 4 km. We will go rain or shine, so dress for the weather and wear comfortable shoes. Bring mosquito repellent, lunch, and if you wish, binoculars and field guides. The walk is limited to 10 participants. **PLEASE REGISTER WITH THE CLUB NUMBER 613-722-3050.**

Thursday 29 May 6:30 p.m.

EARLY EVENING WALK AT THE FLETCHER WILDLIFE GARDEN

Leader: Sandra Garland

Meet: The Fletcher Wildlife Garden, Interpretive Centre, off Prince of Wales Drive

Join Sandra for a leisurely walk around the garden to expand your knowledge of local natural history. Children are most welcome. Dress for the weather and bring insect repellent.

Sunday 1 June 8:30 a.m. to noon

GENERAL INTEREST WALK - MARLBOROUGH FOREST

Leader: Connie Clark

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot by Pizza Pizza (or alternatively at the Marlborough Forest Cedar Grove Parking Lot, E5, Roger Stevens Rd., at approximately 9:15 a.m.).

Marlborough Forest is the largest of Ottawa-Carleton conservation areas and contains a large variety of fauna and flora. At this particular time of nature's year, along the vernal pools, forest, wetlands and fields we can look for Fringed Polygola (Gaywings), Yellow Lady's Slippers, Starflower, Foamflower, Canada Mayflower, and Ram's Head Orchid. We may also see some newly emerging frogs, snakes, early butterflies, water fowl and warblers. Bring bug spray, binoculars and a snack. Rain will cancel this trip. If the weather is questionable, or for more information, call Connie at 613-729-1815.

Saturday 7 June 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

BIRDING ALONG THE OTTAWA RIVER

Leader: Ken Allison

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, NE corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly road, by Pizza Pizza.

On this morning bird outing we shall be looking for Bonaparte's Gulls and other late migrants, as well as local breeding birds. The Ottawa River will be the focus, so bring a scope, if you have one. We may go inland to look for birds like Upland Sandpiper. Dress for the weather, bring a snack and some mosquito repellent. Remember it can be cool by the river early in the morning, even on a warm day.

Saturday
7 June
9:30 a.m.
to
12 :30 p.m.

ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE

Location: Fletcher Wildlife Garden Parking Lot, east side of Prince of Wales Drive, south of the traffic circle. Map at *http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher/location.php*. This annual fund-raiser is a good opportunity to learn more about native plant gardening, ask questions, get advice and buy plants not often found in local nurseries. Donations of native plants and seeds are always welcome (species native to Eastern Ontario only). Please bring them to the FWG any Friday morning or call 613-234-6767 or 613-730-0714, or email *fwg@ofnc.ca*; we'd be happy to pick them up from you.

Tuesday
10 June
7:00 p.m.
Social

7:30 p.m.
Speaker

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING
BUTTERFLIES OF THE OTTAWA AREA

Speakers: Jeff Skevington and Peter Hall

Location: Canadian Museum of Nature (VMMB), Metcalfe and McLeod Streets, The Discovery Zone Theatre, 4th Floor.

Come out and learn more about our local butterflies. There are 103 species of butterflies in the Ottawa area. Peter and Jeff will introduce you to these species, their ecology, how to recognize them, and how to attract them to your garden. This talk is a great opportunity to prepare for the upcoming North American Butterfly Association count that our Club will be doing on July 5. These butterfly counts are like Christmas Bird Counts but are done in more sensible weather. We spend a day in the field in a prescribed circle (centered on Manion Corners) counting butterflies. We will discuss butterfly counts and some of the planning for the Manion Corners count that will take place on the 5th. See below for further details.

Saturday
14 June
9:30 a.m.
to
11:30 a.m.

BUTTERFLY OUTING AT THE FLETCHER WILDLIFE GARDEN

Leader: Diane Lepage

Meet: Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretive Centre, off Prince of Wales Drive.

This outing is for beginners who would like to find out more about butterflies that can be found in the Ottawa District, especially those at the FWG. We will look for the Hobomok Skipper, Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, Spring Azure, Silvery Blue, American Lady, Eastern Tailed Blue and other butterflies that may be around. Participants may also bring their cameras and will get tips for macro photography from Diane who is an accomplished wildlife photographer. Take along water and insect repellent.

Saturday
21 June
9:30 a.m.
to
noon

POLLINATOR WORKSHOP

Leader: Jim Dyer

Location: Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretive Centre, off Prince of Wales Drive

Join us for this free workshop to learn how to identify non-honey bee pollinator insects common to the Ottawa area by Jim Dyer of the Pollinator Monitoring Network of Environment Canada. A one hour introductory lecture will be followed by a field study. Pre-registration is required by June 13. We need a minimum of 10 participants and a maximum of 20 (adults or older children). To register please contact **Heather Hamilton at 613-826-2190 or *hhamilton@magma.ca*.** This event is co-sponsored by the Canadian Biodiversity Institute, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and the Ottawa Field-Naturalist's Club.

Saturday
21 June
1:00 p.m.
to
4:00 p.m.

SKIPPER WORKSHOP

Leaders: Peter Hall and Ross Layberry

Location: The Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretive Centre, off Prince of Wales Drive

Skippers are the LBJs (Little Brown Jobs) of the butterfly world and they present identification challenges to butterfly novices and experts alike. In preparation for the July 5 North American Butterfly Association butterfly count (see below) a skipper identification workshop will give strategies and tips for identifying the 27 local skipper species. Peter Hall and Ross Layberry, two of the co-authors of *The Butterflies of Canada*, will take participants through important identification tips such as habitats, habits, seasonality, size, shape, colouration and flight speed. Bring along your favourite butterfly field guide and become a skipper expert astonishing your naturalist friends.

Sunday
22 June
9:00 a.m.
to
about
3:00 p.m.

WILD FLOWERS OUTING IN THE GATINEAU HILLS

Leader: Carolyn Callaghan (819-456-3904)

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, near Pizza Pizza, (coordinator Connie Clark, 613-729-1815) (or follow the directions below for meeting at the farm at 10:00 a.m.)

Join Carolyn on a trip to her farm in Gatineau Hills. The farm has a variety of habitats, including hardwood forest, mixed wood forest, riparian, pasture, and hay fields. The focus of the trip will be wildflowers. Bring a lunch, drink and suitable clothing. [Directions: Take Hwy 5 North to Tulip Valley (Hwy 5 ends here, so exit off Hwy 5 to the right and proceed to the traffic lights). Turn left on 105 at the Tulip Valley traffic lights. Continue on 105 past the entrance to Wakefield. Exit left onto Hwy 366. Continue along 366 for approximately 15 km (you will pass the town of Masham). Turn right at the flashing lights onto Chemin Cleo Fornier. Travel 3 km to Chemin Monte Belisle and turn left onto it (the road Rene Levesque is located on the right heading east). Travel for 1 km and turn left at #45 (white farm house at the base of a hill). There is a large white pine in front of the house].

Saturday
5 July
8:30 am.

Rain date:
Sunday
6 July

SECOND ANNUAL OTTAWA AREA BUTTERFLY COUNT

Leaders: Jeff Skevington and Peter Hall

Meet: Parking lot at the intersection of Dwyer Hill Road and March Road (NE of Almonte). **Please register for this event with Jeff at 613-832-1970 by July 3.** Numbers are unlimited but we need an idea of the number of participants to set up groups and area coverage in advance. By registering, Jeff can also coordinate groups who would prefer to meet in Ottawa and car pool out to the site. Any specific questions about the trip can be directed to Jeff and if in doubt about the weather call Jeff from 6-9 p.m. Friday.

The North American Butterfly Association (NABA) has coordinated butterfly counts following the same format as Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) for many years. These counts are published as part of an ongoing program of NABA to census the butterflies of North America (see *http://www.naba.org/counts.html* for more information). Volunteer participants' focus on a 24 km diameter circle and conduct a one-day census of all butterflies sighted within that circle. As with CBCs, there is a $4.00 charge to participants to support the publication of the results (not obligatory, but encouraged; children under 12 are free). This is the

Saturday
5 July
8:30 am.

Rain date:
Sunday
6 July

second year that OFNC will sponsor a count. The count area will be centred at Manion Corners (SW of Ottawa), a site used as a former non-OFNC count circle. It includes several important butterfly areas such as the Long Swamp and the Burnt Lands alvar. It is an all day event so bring your lunch. No experience is necessary! We will put teams together on site and match up people so that everyone has a chance to learn from the experts. If you have binoculars and a butterfly net, bring them along. Butterflies may be captured and brought to the count compilation alive for identification and release. We plan to meet at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden at 5:30 p.m. after the count for a compilation and pot luck dinner. Please bring along some food to share plus your own drinks. We will have a collection of butterflies along to help people figure out what they saw and learn a bit more about these amazing creatures. We hope that everyone can make it to the compilation, as it will be a lot of fun; however, if you can't make it, we will get your data in the afternoon before you leave.

Tuesday
8 July
9:30 a.m.

Rain date:
Thursday
10 July

BUTTERFLIES OF LAROSE FOREST
Leader: Peter Hall and Christine Hanrahan
Meet: Fletcher Wildlife Garden off Prince of Wales Drive.
Larose Forest, 40 minutes east of Ottawa, has a tremendous variety of butterflies. In recent years, Delaware, Dion, and Broad-winged Skippers have been found, as well as many other species. Join Peter Hall, co-author of the Butterflies of Canada, for a leisurely stroll along some of the forest trails that have proven especially good for butterflies. Bring insect repellent, lunch, and water. The trip will last approximately 3 hours. The trip is limited to 15 participants. **PLEASE REGISTER WITH THE CLUB NUMBER 613-722-3050.**

DEADLINE: *Material intended for the July - September issue must be in the editor's hands by May 1 2008. Mail your manuscripts to:*

Karen McLachlan Hamilton,
2980 Moodie Drive, Nepean, ON, K2J 4S7 H: (613) 838-4943;
email: ***hamilton@storm.ca***

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